Edited by

FRANCESCA KAMINSKI-JONES AND RHYS KAMINSKI-JONES

CELTS, ROMANS, BRITONS

Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities

CLASSICAL PRESENCES

OXFORD

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CLASSICAL PRESENCES

Attempts to receive the texts, images, and material culture of ancient Greece and Rome inevitably run the risk of appropriating the past in order to authenticate the present. Exploring the ways in which the classical past has been mapped over the centuries allows us to trace the avowal and disavowal of values and identities, old and new. Classical Presences brings the latest scholarship to bear on the contexts, theory, and practice of such use, and abuse, of the classical past.

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Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities

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Francesca Kaminski-Jones
and Rhys Kaminski-Jones

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, OX2 6DP, United Kingdom

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First Edition published in 2020
Impression: 1

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Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
Data available

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020932764

ISBN 978–0–19–886307–6
ebook ISBN 978–0–19–260815–4

Printed and bound by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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Dedicated to our fiercest supporters,

Mam and Nonnino

Acknowledgements

This volume has its roots in a conference held at Oxford on 2 July 2016, and we would like to thank all the participants, funders, and supporters who made it possible. The conference was supported by the University of Wales Centre For Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS), Oxford Medieval Studies, The Oxford Research Centre in the Humanities (TORCH), Royal Holloway University of London, the Institute of Classical Studies, the Classical Association, the Learned Society of Wales, and the Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature. We are very grateful to the conference speakers who, for various reasons, were not able to contribute to this volume, namely Barry Cunliffe, Rosemary Sweet, and especially Ceri Davies, whose work on a draft chapter for this volume we appreciate greatly. We would also like to thank Thomas Charles-Edwards and Nick Lowe, who chaired panels on the day, Katherine Fender, who was of great help in the organization process, all the staff at the Radcliffe Humanities Building who worked with us, and finally Angharad Elias and Nia Davies at CAWCS, whose administrative support was invaluable.

With regard to the volume itself, we would first like to thank our series editors James I. Porter and Lorna Hardwick for their advice and support. We would in particular like to thank Lorna Hardwick, who from the beginning has gone above and beyond the call of duty to steer us through the editing process, and who has been very generous with her time and expertise. A number of people have read and commented on drafts of both the volume and the volume proposal, and we would like to thank them all: Nick Lowe, Mary-Ann Constantine, Ahuvia Kahane, Mark Williams, Dafydd Johnston, and David Parsons. We would also like to thank Kate Mathis, who provided a great deal of specialist advice. Our contributors have been hugely helpful during the editing process, both in their responses to us as editors, and in their willingness to read and respond to each other’s work—an interdisciplinary and transhistorical volume such as

this can only be accomplished through collaboration and collective effort, and we are very thankful that our authors were willing to engage in this effort so thoroughly. Our anonymous readers have helped to improve the volume significantly, and we extend them our sincere thanks. Our thanks also to everyone working for and at Oxford University Press who have contributed to producing this book, in particular Karen Raith, Charlotte Loveridge, Monica Matthews, and Bhavani Govindasamy. If anyone has been accidentally omitted from this list, we apologize and thank them profusely.

None of our work would be possible without the support of loving family and friends, and we hope they know how deeply appreciated they are. And finally, the editors must also thank each other for managing the potentially precarious juggling act of marriage and co-editorship!

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Celts, Romans, Britons

Introduction

Rhys Kaminski-Jones and Francesca Kaminski-Jones

Julius Caesar's invasion in 55 BC has long been seen as a natural starting-point for histories of the 'British' archipelago. The title page of David Hume's multi-volume *History of England* proclaimed that it would tell the (Anglo-)British story 'from the Invasion of Julius Caesar', and many subsequent historical narratives have followed the same model—or at least given 55 BC a prominent starring role.[1] The image of Caesar's landing on the beaches of Kent, with his legionaries stoutly (or obstinately) resisted by a mass of native Britons, has been reproduced time and again since the eighteenth century, and has become one of the defining images representing Celtic/British and Classical influence on the historical identities of Britain and Ireland. A particularly apt example of this trope can be found in Edward Armitage's 1843 cartoon on the subject (Fig. 1.1), which won the artist a £300 prize in a competition to help decorate the rebuilt Houses of Parliament:[2] his victory suggests that 55 BC had a foundational significance for the United Kingdom which the nineteenth-century Parliament sought to represent. Centuries of Roman presence in Britain were summed up by artists like Armitage in images of conflict between 'Classical' and Celtic/British forces, with two discernible sides repeatedly pitted against each other. A common response to these images has been to note the apparent contrast between the antagonists: with whom were viewers meant to sympathize, the Britons, the Romans, or both? In what way was each side thought to have contributed to the imagined

community of Britain? Could their separate influences be combined in a coherent identity, or did their perceived legacies remain distinct and in conflict with one another?[3]

Fig. 1.1. ‘Caesar’s first invasion of Britain: Caesar’s boat is pulled to the shore while his soldiers fight the resisting indigenous warriors’.
Lithograph by W. Linnell after E. Armitage. Credit: Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

A marginal illustration to Matthew Paris’s thirteenth-century *Chronica Majora* (Fig. 1.2) suggests a quite different model of the relationship between ‘Celtic’ and ‘Classical’ in British identity. The image depicts Brutus—descendant of Aeneas, and mythical forefather of the Britons—offering a sacrifice to the goddess Diana on a Mediterranean island. In the accompanying text, it is this Classical deity who directs Brutus to found ‘*altera Troja*’ on British shores, producing a civilization that could be interpreted as both a cousin and a rival to Rome. Indigenous pre-Roman Britishness is here depicted as a repository of influence from Mediterranean antiquity, and the separate (and frankly anachronistic)

categories of Celtic and Classical break down almost completely.[4] This breakdown is not, however, merely a feature of the historical period from which the example is taken. Despite the apparent gulf separating British Celts from their Roman adversaries in many modern depictions, complete separation of the categories ‘Classical’ and ‘Celtic’ remains difficult in the study of British identities even after 1700. When the influence of Rome was claimed by supporters of the modern British state, the Romanized Celt or Briton could provide a vital link to the Classical past. When Celtic difference was stressed in Wales, Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, and Man,[5] it was often impossible to avoid examples or ideas derived from Classical sources, and Celtic worth was asserted in language that offered implicit comparison to the Classical. The traditionally Classical achievements of empire, civilization, and epic heroism were all claimed, at one time or another, for the ancient ancestors of modern-day Celts. Though often defined in opposition to each other, concepts associated with the Celtic and the Classical were available for both combination and contrast in the creation of British identities, and it is the long history of these complicated (and often interdependent) processes that this volume seeks to investigate.

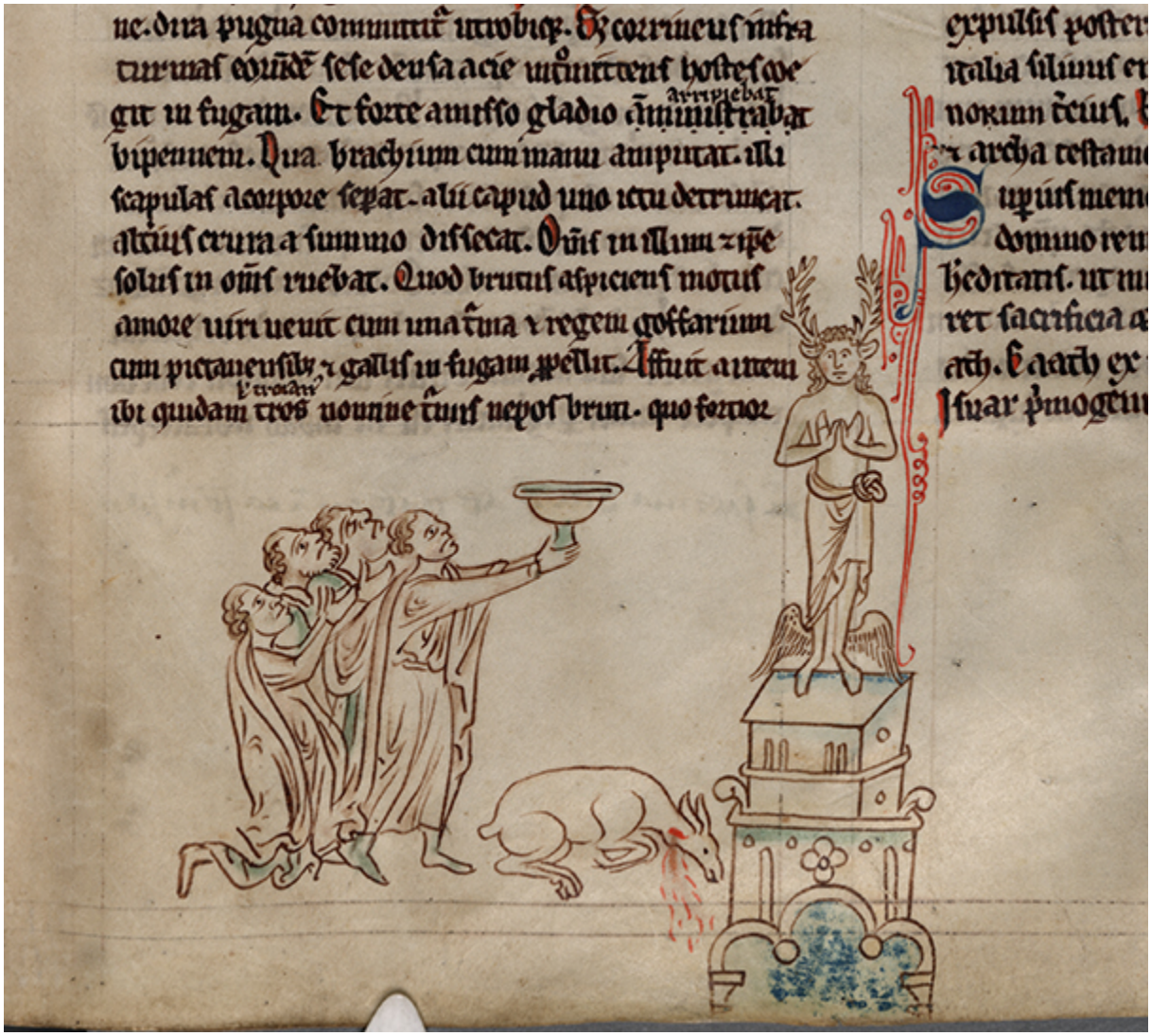

Fig. 1.2. Matthew Paris, ‘Brutus and his Followers Sacrificing to Diana’. Marginal Illustration, The Parker Library, Corpus Christi College Cambridge, MS 26, f. 7.

The volume developed from a conference held in Oxford in July 2016, which explored ideas of Celtic and Classical heritage in Britain from the pre-Roman era to the present day. Something that became clear during the course of this conference was the usefulness of British identity as a tool for thinking about Celtic–Classical interrelations.[6] One reason for this is simply practical: the archipelago in which Britain is situated contains more Celtic speakers than anywhere else in the world, along with a long-standing tradition of Classical reception, education, and scholarship. But

Britishness itself also emerged as a site of cross-pollination between these linguistic and cultural concepts. Britain's name first appears in the historical record as the echo of a Celtic word rendered in Classical languages: the Greek 'Prettanikē', likely to be derived from Pytheas (fourth century BC) and stemming from a Celtic original something like 'Pretani', eventually becoming the 'Britannia' of the Romans.[7] The Celtic–Classical confusion in its most influential medieval origin legend has already been covered above. Its modern empire—self-consciously a successor to Rome's—was nevertheless named by Britons of Welsh ancestry, using models from 'indigenous' history.[8]

Despite this, it was common until recently to set up the Classical and the Celtic as opposing forces in British cultural history: according to Howard Weinbrot, for instance, Celticism was one of the 'anti-classical strains' that entered Anglo-British literature in the eighteenth century.[9] However, an increasing number of studies in the field of Classical reception have begun to highlight Celtic–Classical overlaps, from Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh's path-breaking work on the literary 'Hellenization' of British Celts, to David Hopkins and Charles Martindale's rejection of 'watertight' distinctions between the Classical and the Celtic.[10] This in turn reflects developments within the discipline of Celtic Studies, which in recent decades has become sceptical of 'nativist' interpretive strategies, and has been increasingly willing to include Classical reception (amongst other influences) in the explanation of cultural features previously viewed as exclusively Celtic.[11] But despite this confluence of interests, it remains relatively rare—especially in scholarship on the post-medieval period—for there to be thorough-going interdisciplinary dialogue between Celtic studies and Classical reception. Although there is a considerable and growing literature on Classical influence in medieval Celtic cultures, this material remains relatively under-incorporated into the wider discipline of Classical reception studies. Furthermore, when mainstream Classical reception investigates 'the Celtic' in modern culture, it tends to focus (with a few notable exceptions) on the easily accessible subject of Celtic themes in anglophone literature, leaving untouched the wealth of relevant material that requires knowledge of Celtic languages[12]—just as scholars of what we might helpfully term

‘Celtic reception’ do not tend to engage with the rich and relevant body of Classical reception theory investigating similar processes.[13]

Perhaps the most significant obstacle preventing the full range of Celtic subjects from claiming a secure place within Classical reception is the fact that these topics demand a high degree of interdisciplinary expertise: they not only require knowledge of both Classical and Celtic languages, but also often call for the examination of complex historical and archaeological evidence, ranging over a wide swathe of history. The present collection is an attempt to encourage just this kind of interdisciplinary collaboration, and to demonstrate the abundance of important yet neglected material that such a method can uncover. The editors are a Classicist and a Celticist, both interested in processes of reception and identity formation, and in the significant and often under-explored similarities between their fields. The contributors include representatives from both these disciplines and a range of others—including archaeology, English literature, and history—with their collective expertise covering Hellenic, Brittonic, Latin, Goidelic, and Anglophone cultural traditions. The ‘Classical’ and ‘Celtic’ are both slippery and difficult concepts, whose meaning and relevance are debatable in many of the historical periods covered by these essays. That which can be categorized as ‘Celtic’ or ‘Classical’ in the history of the archipelago is subject to significant variation, for reasons including (but not limited to) historical period, national diversity, and methodological difference. In bringing together such a diverse range of contributors, the difficult and even protean nature of these categories is often emphasized. However, what is also emphasized is how links and distinctions between pre-Roman natives, their purported successors, and the cultures of ancient Greece and Rome have been central to the making and unmaking of British identities throughout recorded history, from antiquity to the present day.

‘Celtic’ and ‘Classical’: Definition, Opposition, and Interaction

The exact significance of the terms ‘Celtic’ and ‘Classical’ are the subject of intense (and probably irresolvable) scholarly debate. Since the 1980s,

when the very concept of ancient and modern Celtic identity became controversial, Celticists have tended to be extremely careful about their use of the term ‘Celtic’. It is now common to stress its different and debatable meanings when used in archaeological, linguistic, and modern cultural contexts, and to acknowledge that received ideas about ‘the Celtic’ require scholarly interrogation and qualification. This is especially true in the case of Britain and Ireland, whose pre-Roman inhabitants were not directly referred to as Celts in surviving Classical or medieval texts, and only began to be recorded under that name from the sixteenth century onwards.[14] The ambiguities and ideological claims inherent in terming the cultures of Ancient Greece and Rome ‘Classical’ have also frequently been commented on in recent scholarship: the internal coherence of ‘Classical’ Greece and Rome as a concept, its interaction with terms like ‘classicism’ and ‘the classic’, and its problematic relationship with other traditions that could be deemed Classical have all been prominent topics in contemporary academic discourse.[15] For the purposes of this collection, we have allowed our contributors the freedom to choose their own definitions of the ‘Celtic’ and the ‘Classical’ within the British and Irish past. ‘Celtic’ will generally refer to the Celtic languages, to the pre-Roman inhabitants of the archipelago and their apparent inheritors, or to cultures and regions commonly designated Celtic.[16] ‘Classical’ will predominantly be used to indicate the influence of ancient Greek and Roman cultures, whether through direct contact in antiquity or later reception. However, whilst it is not our intention to present a definitive argument about the nature of either term, we do hope to emphasize how frequently these concepts have been imagined in relation to one another over the centuries, how distinction between their roles is not always easy to achieve, and the extent to which they are implicated in one another throughout the history of British identity formation.

In the account of the first invasion of Britain in Caesar’s *Commentarii de Bello Gallico* (Commentaries on the Gallic War), it is emphasized that Britain not only lies beyond the ken of imperial Rome, but that it is also difficult for Romans to gain any information about it whatsoever. Caesar is aware that his enemies during the Gallic campaign have received succour from the Britons, but the only regular visitors to the island are apparently traders, and their knowledge is limited to coastal areas. When a Roman officer is sent to scout out the territory, we are told that he ‘*navi egredi ac*

se barbaris committere non auderet' ('did not dare to leave his ship and entrust himself to barbarians') (4.20–1), his reluctance suggesting that the Britons' separation from the Roman world made them hostile, dangerous, and fundamentally 'other'.[17] It has been argued that Caesar exaggerates British separation in this passage, and that the text provides evidence that undermines its own assertion of otherness.[18] However, such stark contrasts between the allegedly barbaric Celtic world and Classical civilization have been central to the understanding of these two concepts since the earliest descriptions of the Celts.

Many commentators have noted that when ancient Mediterranean authors indulged in Celtic ethnography, they often focused on customs that differentiated Celtic culture from their idea of normative behaviour, and portrayed Celts and Britons as examples of debased barbarity or idealized primitiveness. Celts, for example, were characterized by excessive drinking, taboo sexual behaviours, moral inconstancy, and human sacrifice, but were also sometimes depicted as 'noble savages' uncorrupted by civilized vice. Elements of both tendencies can be found in this passage from Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca Historiæ* (first century BC), describing the Gaulish practice of using severed human heads as trophies:

> The heads of their most distinguished enemies they [the Gauls] embalm in cedar-oil and carefully preserve in a chest, and these they exhibit to strangers … And some men among them, we are told, boast that they have not accepted an equal weight of gold for the head they show, displaying a barbarous sort of greatness of soul; for not to sell that which constitutes a witness and proof of one's valour is a noble thing, but to continue to fight against one of our own race, after he is dead, is to descend to the level of beasts. (5.29)[19]

The possibility of gaining accurate knowledge of 'barbarian' societies from this ethnographic tradition has been the subject of much academic debate, but it is generally accepted that elements of it had more to do with the self-definition of Greeks and Romans than with the objective investigation of foreign societies. Much of this ancient ethnography, therefore, might have done little more than construct a barbarian Celtic 'other' in contrast to the self-consciously civilized Mediterranean world.[20]

When the idea of the Celts re-entered European thought from the fifteenth century onwards—a period when the term 'Celts' is first recorded in relation to the peoples of Britain and Ireland—the contrasts

and otherings of Classical authors were often replicated.[21] It was this kind of thinking which underlay David Hume's claim that the 'Celtae' in medieval Ireland had long been 'buried in the most profound barbarism and ignorance', since 'the Romans, from whom all the western world derived its civility' had never conquered them.[22] Significantly, the above observation was made by Hume in the context of the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland, demonstrating how the Classical discourse of Celtic barbarism was often used as an analogue for more recent conquests of Britain's 'barbarian' fringes.[23] In the nineteenth century, similarly sharp contrasts between the Celtic and the Classical were translated into the language of cultural comparativism and racial theory: in Ernest Renan's foundational work of nineteenth-century Celticism, *La Poésie des races celtiques* (1854), he prefixed a description of the medieval-Welsh tale *Breuddwyd Macsen Wledig* (The Dream of Macsen Wledig) with the following contrast between the Celtic and Classical imaginations:[24]

> The limited nature of Greek and Italian imagination is due to the easy expansiveness of the peoples of the South, with whom the soul, wholly spread abroad, reflects but little within itself. Compared with the classical imagination, the Celtic imagination is indeed the infinite contrasted with the finite.[25]

Renan—an important figure in the Romantic reappraisal of British and Irish Celts, and himself a Breton by birth—valued Celtic difference in a manner that diverged strongly from Hume.[26] However, his depiction of Celtic culture did not overturn Hume's contrast between Classical civilization and Celtic/British barbarism, but instead re-evaluated both concepts in the spirit of Romantic primitivism. In both examples quoted above, therefore, the trope of contrasting the Celtic and the Classical was maintained along similar lines. Whatever the two categories might have signified to Hume and Renan, they were presented as being essentially different, verging on opposites, and representing polarities of civilization/centrality and barbarism/peripherality.

This long history of contrasts between the Classical and the Celtic, and the potentially dubious accuracy of the Classical sources on which the trope was founded, has led some commentators to argue that an artificially polarized contrast between the 'classically' civilized and the 'barbarically' uncivilized—often imposed on a periphery from within a culturally

powerful centre—is the only meaningful way to interpret ‘the Celtic’ as a concept. In his iconoclastic and influential book *The Celts: The Construction of a Myth* (1992), Malcolm Chapman argued that Celtic identity was nothing to do with definable ethnic attributes or cultural continuity, but was instead the result of recurring contact between cultural centres and peripheries from Classical antiquity to the present day:

> The Celts and their society, as we know them from the classics, were positively defined in only one limited sense, through the difference perceived by the literate Greek and Roman worlds that have left us our records … . The ‘Celts’, in opposition to the Classical world, disappear when that world disappears. They re-emerge, however, in opposition to the Germanic world.[27]

In other words, when the ‘Germanic’ Anglo-British centre is made to stand in for Classical civilization, or figured as the heir to Roman imperial greatness, the Celtic-speaking fringes are imagined, by implication, as a continuation of ancient Celtic barbarity.[28] Although a number of Chapman’s claims about Celtic incoherence remain contentious (especially his opposition to ‘the Celtic’ as a valid linguistic category), he correctly emphasizes an important strand of thought about the Celtic–Classical relationship in Britain: the way a dichotomy drawn from antiquity has been mapped imperfectly onto later encounters between a self-consciously central Anglo-Britain and its rural, Celtic-speaking peripheries. The implications of this argument for the discipline of Celtic studies are significant, and have not gone unnoticed; its implications for Classical reception studies, on the other hand, should be given considerably more attention. If we accept Chapman’s argument, the very existence of ‘Celtic identity’ in Britain as it is commonly understood becomes a profoundly significant (and arguably misguided) instance of Classical reception.

This tradition of polarized contrast, however, is not the only way in which the Celtic and the Classical have been imagined in the archipelago. Although Celtic society could be portrayed as the barbarian opposite to Classical (or Anglo-British) civilization, and the Celtic imagination as an expression of profound anti-Classicism, identities associated with the pre-Roman past and the Celtic-speaking regions of Britain did not necessarily accord with these stereotypes. A good example of this can be found in the retelling of Julius Caesar’s invasion in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s twelfth-

century *Historia Regum Britanniae* (History of the Kings of Britain), a text which had significant influence on British identities in England and Wales. In Geoffrey's account, the British king Cassibelaunus gives the following reply to Caesar when the latter demands that the Britons submit to Rome:

> You have sought to offend yourself, Caesar, since the blood of common nobility flows from Aeneas through the veins of Britons and Romans alike. Our shared lineage should make us the firmest of friends. Friendship, then, not servitude, should you be asking of us, for we would rather extend our friendship than take on the yoke of servitude.[29]

Clearly, a history of 'Celtic' and 'Classical' influence in relation to British identities cannot rely on polarization and contrast alone. Firstly, there is the obvious fact that almost four centuries of Roman presence in Britain had a substantial impact on the 'native' pre-conquest population, as will be discussed in Alex Woolf's contribution to this volume. The subsequent spread of Classically derived knowledge and literature throughout the archipelago is also impossible to ignore, even in areas and eras commonly thought of as being thoroughly Celtic. Since the eighteenth century, the construction of Celtic identities has often focused on vernacular Welsh and Gaelic texts from the middle ages, when literature in Celtic languages first appears in the historical record. However, writings that survive from Celtic-speaking regions of medieval Britain and Ireland are not the products of splendid Celtic isolation, but instead reflect societies in which the legacies of the Graeco-Roman world formed an important part of literary culture. As Ceri Davies has argued, the medieval Welsh considered themselves 'in some way the last remnants of *Romanitas* in Britain',[30] and in the words of Ralph O'Connor 'early-medieval Ireland clearly had an unusually lively tradition of learning and literary activity in the late-antique Classical tradition'.[31]

Many important texts by post-Roman 'Celts' were, of course, actually written in Latin (see, for instance, Gildas' sixth-century *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae*), and medieval poets writing in Celtic languages could happily allude to Classical heroes like Alexander, Hercules, and Hector along with more home-grown figures like Arthur and Cú Chulainn.[32] Furthermore, a number of influential medieval origin myths belonging to Britain's Celtic-speaking peoples did not portray them as separate and distinct from the Classical world, but as inheritors of a shared legacy from the distant Graeco-Roman past. The above quotation from

Geoffrey of Monmouth alludes to the most famous of these myths, namely the Trojan descent of the Britons via Brutus and Aeneas, first recorded in the ninth-century Cambro-Latin *Historia Brittonum.* However, there was also an early-medieval tradition that suggested the Irish could claim ancient Greek ancestry, an idea influentially applied to the Scots in John of Fordun's fourteenth-century chronicle writings.[33] Greg Woolf has argued that Classical ethnography in Celtic regions was not wholly populated with artificial barbarian 'others', suggesting that these writings also contained information gathered from a 'middle-ground' where interplay between Graeco-Roman and 'barbarian' traditions remained possible.[34] The continuing importance of hybrid origin myths suggests that these 'middle-ground' negotiations of identity were not confined to antiquity, and had a far-reaching influence on the construction of identities in Britain and Ireland.

Many subsequent attempts to characterize British 'natives' or invoke Celtic traditions had to negotiate the implications of this cultural cross-fertilization in one way or another. That there had been contact between the native population and the Classical world was undeniable, even if the nature and extent of this Classical influence was debatable, and applied in different degrees to different areas of the archipelago. In some cases, Classical influence on British Celtic speakers was downplayed or ignored by the Celtophiles, revivalists, and Celtic nationalists of the modern era: Welsh lexicographer William Owen Pughe, for instance, completed a dictionary in 1803 that expunged Latin etymologies from the history of the Welsh language,[35] whilst the Scottish antiquarian James Logan sought out the best-preserved 'Celtic manners' amongst Highlanders, who had 'signalised themselves by determined and effectual resistance, to the utmost efforts of the Romans'.[36] However, the opposite route could also be taken. Saunders Lewis, one of the founding members of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru (The Welsh National Party), celebrated the Welsh literary tradition not as an anti-Classical Celtic isolate but as 'the direct heir in the British isles of the literary discipline of classical Greece and Rome'; in doing so, he was implicitly denigrating the English Classical inheritance as indirect and second-hand, and constructing a Celtic-speaking Welsh identity that was self-consciously European rather than British.[37]

Inhabitants of Britain who were less obviously identified with the pre-Roman population also had to negotiate this issue of Celtic/Classical contact and hybridity, especially if they wished to claim some kind of Classical influence on English culture. Sometimes the influence of the Classical world on Celtic speakers was downplayed by such outsiders, as in the early English material discussed in this volume by Michael Bintley, or in the Anglo-British identity promulgated by many nineteenth-century writers. Thomas Babington Macaulay, for instance, argued that the Britons 'received only a faint tincture of Roman arts and letters' during the Romano-British period,[38] and (according to Catharine Edwards) preferred to see lasting Classical influence in Britain as something selectively and 'freely chosen' from the Renaissance onwards.[39] At other times, however, identification with the pre-conquest population was vital to wider British or English claims of Classically derived authority: see, for instance, medieval and early-modern Anglo-British attempts to appropriate British/Trojan history (described in this volume by Helen Fulton and Philip Schwyzer), or the interest in Romanized Ancient Britons cultivated by some nineteenth-century antiquarians and archaeologists.[40] Throughout the archipelago, the role of 'Celts' in British identity formation was often to serve as a link to the Classical world, rather than to stand in opposition to it.

Even when the direct or imagined influence of the Classical world on insular Celts was not being emphasized, the Celtic was not necessarily portrayed as the polar opposite of the Classical: instead it was often seen to embody the same ideals and principles associated with Mediterranean antiquity. In a 1772 work partly intended to rebut Hume's portrayal of Irish barbarity, Sylvester O'Halloran took pride in the fact that Roman Emperors were known to the ancient Irish as '*Kings of all the World*, Ireland *Excepted*', this being 'A circumstance expressive at once of the civilized understandings, and independent spirit of our forefathers'.[41] O'Halloran here depicts Irish independence from Rome not as a sign of uninterrupted barbarity, but as proof of his nation's early arrival at 'civilized' understanding, figuring Irish Celtic society as a counterpart to Roman civilization rather than as a benighted backwater. A similar motivation can be seen in the work of the eighteenth-century Welsh antiquarian Lewis Morris, who attempted to portray Celtic Europe not as

the barbaric opposite of Mediterranean civilization, but as a ‘Celtic Empire’ that was predecessor, inspiration, and rival to Rome:

> Under the name of Celtae they performed very great things, and had an empire of vast extent … These Celtae were the people who first brought the Greeks … under subjection, and gave them their gods … and also their learning and manner of worship. And from these Celtae the ancestors of the Romans … had also their religion and a good deal of their language … The panic the Romans were always under when the Gauls made any excursions upon them … shews the greatness of the Celtic empire and the valour of the Gauls.[42]

The concept of ‘Celtic Civilization’ is current to this day, forming the basis for a number of introductory university courses and popularizing books—the accompanying book to a 2015 BBC series on the Celts, for instance, was subtitled ‘Search for a Civilization’.[43] Even the idea of a ‘Celtic Empire’, though less common (and universally rejected by scholars), also occasionally resurfaces, demonstrating a long-standing tendency to describe Celtic achievements using language that implicitly suggests Classical analogues.[44]

This mirroring of the Classical in the Celtic has often been bound up with the perceived prestige of Classical antiquity, and the corresponding desire amongst self-defined Celts and Celtic scholars to assert their own claims to significance, and defend themselves against condescension and ridicule. However, there is also a sense in which the processes of Classical and Celtic reception in Britain are not merely competitors, but counterparts—twinned ways of appealing to the distant British or European past. There are interesting similarities linking the historical development of the terms ‘Celtic’ and ‘Classical’. Both are derived from words first documented in the literatures of ancient Greece and Rome: Celts (or *κελτοί*) appear for the first time in Greek texts from *c*.500 BC,[45] whilst the modern sense of the word ‘Classical’ is usually traced back to Aulus Gellius’s *Noctes Atticae* (Attic Nights) in the second century AD. Both concepts subsequently disappear from the historical record in medieval Europe, before reappearing in the late-fifteenth century: the Italian humanist Filippo Beroaldo is the first known author to have reclaimed *classicus* in 1496,[46] whilst his countryman Annius of Viterbo is often credited with reintroducing ‘Celt’ and its cognates to Western culture via his forged genealogies of nations *c*.1498.[47] Both terms

eventually found their way into English in the following centuries, with the *OED* recording ‘classicke’ (in the sense of Classical languages) in 1597,[48] and noting the earliest use of ‘Celts’ in a work of 1607.[49] The reappearance of both these words and concepts in Britain was derived from the early-modern reception and reclamation of antiquity, both were developed and fleshed out by eighteenth-century historians, antiquarians, and critics, and each eventually gave its name to an established discipline of study in the nineteenth-century academy. Historically, the appreciation and institutionalization of Celtic studies has lagged significantly behind that of Classical studies,[50] but this does not mean that there are not significant points of comparison linking their scholarly revival and reputation: the concept of ‘antiquity’ in general may have marginalized the Celtic and been implicitly Classical, but the concept of ‘British antiquity’ developed amongst antiquarians and historians from the early-modern period put the two concepts (at least theoretically) on a more even footing.[51]

One feature shared by both the Celtic and the Classical is the ability of each category to destabilize and undermine conceptions of the other. Edith Hall’s essay in this volume on the nineteenth-century reception of Caractacus epitomizes this tendency, demonstrating how the construction of the distant Celtic past is often heavily and necessarily reliant on Classical sources. Caractacus, a figure known almost exclusively through Classical texts, nevertheless became a vital symbol for Celtic self-fashioning in Wales and Britain during the long nineteenth century, in much the same way as that other defiant Tacitean native, the Caledonian Calgacus, did in Scotland. If fundamental elements of Celtic identity were accessed primarily through Classical sources, in what sense could the Celtic be seen as an entirely separate category? On the other hand, comparison with Celtic Britain could reveal the huge variety and contradictory elements disguised by monolithic conceptions of the ‘Classical’. The eighteenth-century Highlander James Macpherson repeatedly suggested similarities between the poetry of Homer and his creatively reconstituted (and largely self-authored) Celtic epics. Significantly, however, this comparison did not invoke Homer as an exemplar of polished and civilized classicism, but because his poetry was comparably primitive to that of the ‘ancient’ Ossian: as Macpherson’s critical cheerleader Hugh Blair put it, ‘Homer is of all the great poets, the

one whose manner, and whose times come the nearest to Ossian'.[52] In this, Macpherson and Blair were capitalizing on the ambiguity of the archaic Homer's 'Classical' status: 'in some ways prototypically classical, in others … felt to be more or less classical than the classical authors of the fifth century', as James I. Porter has put it.[53] Macpherson's comparison questioned the extent to which 'primitive' Homer could exist in the same category as the advanced decadence of imperial Rome, where (according to Macpherson) 'Heliogabalus disgraced human nature'.[54] A number of the essays in this volume document attempts to construct contrasted notions of Celtic and Classical inheritance in Britain and Ireland: just as frequently, however, they reveal the flexibility, hybridity, and ambiguity of such constructions of historical identity.

* * * * *

The essays in this volume are arranged chronologically, not in an attempt to create a single over-arching narrative of Classical and Celtic identity in Britain and Ireland, but so that readers remain aware of both the historically contingent nature of the Celtic and the Classical as concepts, and the elements of continuity that link their roles in British identity formation. The early-modern period is often put forward as a watershed in the history of British Celticity, with George Buchanan's suggestion of British Celticity in 1582, Edward Lhuyd's categorization of the Celtic languages in 1707, and the birth of Romantic nationalism and racial theory in the late-eighteenth century establishing the concept's innovative modern significance. But whilst it is true that a self-defining modern 'Celt' is very different from an ancient or medieval British Celtic speaker (for whom that term might well have been meaningless), we nevertheless believe that it is important to draw lines of conceptual connection between them: ones linking, for instance, Julius Caesar's barbarous Britons, Gerald of Wales's uncivilized Irish, David Hume's primitive Celtae, and Jez Butterworth's anarchic druids in Sky's recent series *Britannia* (2018–). Our structure is therefore intended to be both chronological and trans-historical, allowing for the analysis of historical contingency *and* significant *longue-durée* commonality.

The focus throughout the volume will be on areas and periods in which forms of specifically British identity were current, although we also

incorporate discussion of Welsh, English, Irish, and Scottish identities opposed to Britishness. It is for this reason that of all the Classical peoples that have had relevance within archipelagic Celtic identities, it is the Trojans and the Romans who are most prominent in our volume: Roman Britannia and Brutus of Troy were fundamental to early conceptions of Britishness in ways that Achilles (for instance) was not. It is also for this reason that the opening chapters deal primarily with Wales and England, where British identities always retained significance after the withdrawal of Rome, whilst Scotland and Ireland come into greater focus from the early-modern period, when the expansion and consolidation of a self-consciously British state had a powerful effect on Celtic identity formation. Our focus on periods of explicit Britishness is not intended as a dismissal of Celtic or Classical influence in Ireland and Scotland before this period—it is rather a practical decision for the sake of coherence, in a volume that ranges widely across time and promiscuously amongst disciplines.

The first two essays deal with the aftermath of Roman presence in Britain during late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, detailing how the direct influence of the Roman empire in Britain gave way to recollection, reconstruction, and sometimes effacement of pre-Roman and Romano-British pasts. Alex Woolf's topic is the mixture of Celtic and Classical elements in the process of late-antique British ethnogenesis: whilst the fact that this mixing occurred is uncontroversial, Woolf suggests that it is necessary to separate the direct effects of Roman and British cultural contact—i.e. British linguistic, institutional, or other debts to Rome—from the way in which Britons recalled their post-Roman past. In so doing, he suggests that early-medieval Britons came to misunderstand their relationship with their own Romano-British ancestors, thus arguing for new interpretations of early-medieval British history, and drawing attention to how the realities of post-Roman Britain became subject to the alterations and uncertainties of historical memory.

Michael Bintley continues this theme with his examination of post-Roman identities in early-medieval England, with particular reference to the repurposing (both literal and figurative) in this period of Romano-British towns. He argues that despite evidence of significant integration between 'Anglo-Saxons'[55] and Britons in early-medieval England, and a widespread effort on the part of the former to use Roman Britain's urban

legacy to their own advantage, texts from England nevertheless routinely portrayed Celtic-speaking Britons in this period as subalterns or threatening ‘others’, denying them a Roman-derived authority that they claimed for themselves. Early ‘English’ culture strove to adopt a Roman-inspired identity without reference to the Britons, an example of how English claims to Classical status often involved downplaying the Classical inheritance of insular Celts.

The next pair of essays chart the changing fortunes of Trojan-British identity from the medieval to the early-modern period, demonstrating how the influential myth of Britain’s foundation by Brutus created complex overlaps and interactions between Classical and Celtic elements in British culture. Helen Fulton begins by detailing the disputed and ambiguous status of Troy in late-medieval writing: invested with different significance by the English, the Welsh, and the Irish, invoked as either a literal origin myth or a symbolic inheritance, and figured as both a sign of ancestral glory and warning from the past, Troy emerges as a profoundly multi-faceted and contested site of struggle. Investigating texts in Welsh, English, Irish, and Latin, Fulton demonstrates how Troy provided few easy answers as to the nature of late-medieval Britishness, but nevertheless formed a vital foundation for subsequent British identities.

Philip Schwyzer’s chapter follows this tradition into the early-modern era, when the idea of a united Britain was almost realized by the 1603 union of the Scottish and English Crowns. Medieval traditions of ‘Trojan’ Britishness were symbolically vital in this short-lived push towards unity, but were also increasingly attacked by those who valued Classical authorities over medieval chronicles. Schwyzer argues, however, that despite the faltering of James the VI and I’s dream, and the final collapse of Trojan-British history in scholarly circles, Trojan Britishness retained a popular significance that has often been underestimated, and continued to form unexpected alliances between the Anglo-British centre and the Celtic-speaking periphery well into the seventeenth century.

Pía Coira’s essay, on the other hand, covers the Trojan-British tradition’s Gaelic counterpart, namely the Gaelic culture of Classical reception that led (amongst other things) to the idea that Irish and Scottish Gaels were descended from the Trojans’ Greek adversaries. Coira investigates instances of Classical allusion in early-modern Scottish Gaelic poetry, a corpus of literature that has received scant attention from

mainstream Classical reception studies. Investigating this material's inheritance from medieval Irish scholarship, its easy combination of allusions to figures from Celtic and Classical history, and the politicization of its Gaelic Classicism in support of the Stuart/Stewart royal family, Coira demonstrates how a literature sometimes defined as being both anti-British and anti-Classical was in fact heavily invested in the construction of an alternative Celtic–Classical Britishness.

From the eighteenth century onwards, the cultivation of national and cultural histories was often inextricable from the growth of cultural and political nationalisms. The next three essays in this collection all touch, either directly or obliquely, on this phenomenon, showing how the 'Four Nations' of the archipelago—and the British nation itself—used Celtic and Classical pasts to define themselves in the modern era. Mary-Ann Constantine's essay concentrates on the literature of the eighteenth-century 'home tour' in Britain, when increasing numbers of travellers were choosing to visit Celtic-speaking peripheries like Scotland and Wales. Constantine demonstrates how the eighteenth-century appreciation of these Celtic nations was often heavily mediated by Classical texts and histories, and uses the palimpsestic nature of travel literature to highlight the sheer variety of historical, cultural, and political perspectives that contributed to Romantic Celticism.

Building on her pioneering work on Caractacus in eighteenth-century drama, Edith Hall's chapter focuses on the continuing reception of this Ancient British leader during the long nineteenth century. Hall uses the flourishing of patriotic Caractacan performances connected with Elgar's 1898 cantata—in particular the records of such performances in the regional Welsh press in the run-up to the First World War—to examine the role played by Caractacus in contemporary Welsh and British identities. Examining the use of Caractacus to express both defiant Welshness and a fervent commitment to Britain's imperialist project, Hall reveals how the Celtic–Classical encounter central to the Caractacus narrative could be used to harmonize the superficially competing claims of peripheral nationality and imperial supremacy.

Arabella Currie's chapter, by contrast, examines the role that Celtic–Classical comparisons played in the cultural movement towards Irish independence, identifying the significance of such comparativism in the Revivalist works of George Sigerson. Currie demonstrates that widespread

identification of British imperialism in Ireland with its Roman counterpart in Britain did not preclude authors like Sigerson from connecting Celtic Irish culture to that of Classical Rome. She argues, furthermore, that Sigerson used his theories of Roman–Irish cultural relations to bolster Irish claims to cultural significance, using translation and scholarship in order to circumvent anglicized Classicism, and to reconstitute literary hierarchies in Ireland's favour.

The final two chapters reflect on the issues of essentialism/hybridity and exclusion/inclusion often associated with questions of nation, ethnicity, and identity, and demonstrate how the legacies of Celts and Romans in Britain have remained a focus for these ideas throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Philip Burton uses the reflections of sub-Roman Britain in J.R.R. Tolkien's fiction to argue against accusations that the author was a 'blood and soil' nationalist. He demonstrates that the 'Crypto' Celts and Romans who appear in Tolkien's work are not strictly races apart, but instead display hybrid identities and integrate with other ethnic groups. Burton sees in this a reflection of the Catholic Tolkien's ideal of human unity, his profound sense of historical complexity, and his localist discomfort with statist and ethnocentric nationalisms.

Richard Hingley's chapter concludes the volume with an exploration of how Hadrian's Wall can symbolize both national division and international unity in twenty-first-century Britain. Hingley details the Wall's continuing (and often contradictory) roles in the negotiation of Scottish, English, British, and European identities, during a period in which the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum and the 2016 EU Referendum have left those concepts in a profound state of flux. His chapter documents a continuing tendency to portray the Wall as an impassable ethnic and cultural boundary, dividing English and Scots into opposing nationalities much as Romans and British Celts have long been depicted as warring armies. However, whilst accepting the continuing power of these divisive interpretations of the Wall, Hingley insists on our ability to use this monument to 'tell other tales' about Celticity, Classicism, and British identity—an ambition to which, in more general terms, this volume as a whole aspires.

Rhys Kaminski-Jones and Francesca Kaminski-Jones, *Celts, Romans, Britons: Introduction* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British*

Identities. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0001

[1] Hume (1762) title page.

[2] The competition sought designs for frescoes that were to decorate the interior of the rebuilt Parliament. Fig. 1.1 is a lithograph of Armitage's original 1843 cartoon. For details of the competition in the wider context of the rebuilding of Parliament, see Shenton (2016) 119–26.

[3] For discussion of this work and others depicting British resistance to Rome in the context of the redecoration of Parliament, see Smiles (1994) 148; Warren (2016).

[4] Luard (1872) 19–20. For discussion of the image and its accompanying text and contexts, see Lewis (1987) 159–61.

[5] Unfortunately, this volume has less to say about Cornwall and Man than the larger Celtic-identified areas within the archipelago. For relevant material regarding these areas, see Stoyle (2002) 147–9 for the importance of Classical historians within early-modern Cornish patriotism, and Thomson (1961) for an early example of Manx Gaelic literature that claims late-antique contact with Rome.

[6] The place of the Celtic–Classical relationship within British identities can be usefully compared to equivalents in continental Europe—particularly France, given the survival of Breton. See, for example, the discussion of Ancient Gaul's symbolic place in the French Revolutionary period in Jourdan (1996), or the three articles on the Asterix comics as Classical reception in Kovacs and Marshall (2016) 113–57. However, these subjects remain beyond the scope of the present volume.

[7] For an introduction to early Classical sources for the names of Britain and Ireland, see Cunliffe (2013) 3–5. See also Koch (2002).

[8] For Humphrey Llwyd and John Dee's influence in coining 'the British Empire' as an English phrase, see Armitage (2000) 46, 52,105; Llwyd (2011) 8.

[9] Weinbrot (1993) 477.

[10] Hall and Macintosh (2005) 183–214; Hopkins and Martindale (2012) 17.

[11] For a path-breaking essay on Classical and other influences in poetry associated with the Welsh bardic figure Taliesin, see Haycock (1987). For an accessible introduction to this critical heritage in an Irish context, see Williams (2016) 46–9.

[12] For a very welcome counter-example, see O'Higgins (2017).

[13] For an exception to this tendency, see the use of Lorna Hardwick's definition of reception studies in Fimi (2017) 6.

[14] For summary and discussion of these debates, see Sims-Williams (1998), and Koch (2007a) 1–17.

[15] For a general discussion of the problematic nature of 'Classical Antiquity', see Porter (2006); for 'the classic', see Lianeri and Zajko (2008) 1–21; for 'comparative' and 'immanent' critique of the concept of European antiquity, see Lianeri (2011) 7–8.

[16] It is important to note that, as editors, we do not assert the pre-Roman population to have been definitively 'indigenous' or 'Celtic', nor do we claim genetic continuity between these peoples and those identified as modern Celts. However, we do accept the salience of both these

ideas in the history of British identity formation. For a summary of recent scientific research into the nature of the pre-Roman population, see Hingley et al. (2018) 6–9.

[17] Edwards (1997). Our translation.

[18] See Braund (1996) 59–61.

[19] Oldfather (1939).

[20] For a summary of this argument, see G. Woolf (2011) 23.

[21] The Scottish antiquary George Buchanan is credited with applying Celtic terminology to Britain and Ireland for the first time in his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582), along with provisionally identifying the Celtic languages as we now understand them. See Collis (1999).

[22] Hume (1762) 299.

[23] For a tradition of such writing about Ireland stretching back to the Classics via Gerald of Wales, see Leerssen (2006) 28–35.

[24] Renan's choice of text here is rather ironic, given that it attests to the significance of the usurping Western Roman Emperor Magnus Maximus in medieval Welsh culture. For this tradition, see McKenna (2012) 141–2, and also Fulton in this volume, 63–4.

[25] Renan (1896) 9.

[26] For the role of Renan and others in redefining the Celts during the long nineteenth century, see Leerssen (1996a).

[27] Chapman (1992) 68.

[28] For the construction of a 'Germanic' identity in England, and its occasional extension to the Scottish Lowlands, see Kidd (1995); Pittock (1999) 55–6.

[29] Faletra (2008) 84–5.

[30] Davies (1995) 3.

[31] O'Connor (2014) 2.

[32] Even the portrayal of these 'Celtic heroes' may at times have been influenced by Classical sources: see, for example, discussion of possible parallels between the heroes of Latin Epic and Cú Chulainn in Miles (2011) 145–93, and also Clarke (2006) 260–71.

[33] For the idea of Greek descent in early-medieval Ireland, see Jaski (2003). For John of Fordun and the Greek roots of the Scots, see Terrell (2008).

[34] G. Woolf (2011) 8–31.

[35] See William Owen [Pughe] (1803).

[36] Logan (1831) i–x.

[37] Jones and Thomas (1973) 115.

[38] Macaulay (1849) 4. For Macaulay's promotion of 'English exceptionalism' (despite his father's Highland Scottish roots), see C. Hall (2012) 160, 181.

[39] Edwards (1999) 81.

[40] See Hoselitz (2007).

[41] O'Halloran (1772) 140.

[42] Morris (1878) xxiii–xxviii.

[43] Roberts (2015). For the (perhaps problematic) significance of 'Celtic Civilization' university courses, see Koch (2007a) 7.

[44] See Ellis (2001).

[45] The earliest surviving mention of Celts is thought to be that of Hecataeus of Miletus. See Koch (2007a) 11–12.

[46] Citroni (2006) 208.

[47] For the reappearance of apparent Celts in his work, see Chapman (1992) 201–3 and Collis (2003) 34.

[48] *OED Online*, 's. v. Classic, adj. and n.', http://www.oed.com.ezproxy01.rhul.ac.uk/view/Entry/33880?redirectedFrom=Classic#eid (accessed 24 January 2017).

[49] *OED Online*, 's. v. Celt, n.1', http://www.oed.com.ezproxy01.rhul.ac.uk/view/Entry/29532?rskey=8rAUMp&result=1&isAdvanced=false#eid (accessed 24 January 2017).

[50] For the relationship between Classics and Celtic Studies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see Koch (2007b).

[51] For similar attitudes to the Classical and Gothic/Celtic past in Romantic-era Britain, see Groom (2008).

[52] Blair (1763) 22.

[53] Porter (2006) 23.

[54] Macpherson (1773) 231.

[55] Finalized copies of this volume's chapters were submitted in September 2019, the same month that specialist controversy about continued use of the term 'Anglo-Saxon'—given its racial and racist associations—became a widely publicized issue. Usage in this volume therefore often reflects the previous scholarly conventions, under which this term was widely utilized and considered by many to be unproblematic in a scholarly context. Debate amongst early-medieval specialists is on-going, but as editors we have decided to remove the term from our introduction, excepting the single usage above, kept for explanatory purposes. Neither editor is an early-medievalist, but we support the aims of those in all fields attempting to confront structural racism in our academic conventions and institutions, and combat the misuse of history by far-right extremists. For an introduction to some of the issues surrounding the term, see Miyashiro (2017), Dockray-Miller (2017), and Rambaran-Olm (2019). For information regarding the original historical adoption of the term in certain contexts, and discussion of the significant evidence for 'ethnic' interaction and intermixture in early-medieval England, see Bintley's chapter in this volume, 35–9.

2

British Ethnogenesis

A Late Antique Story

Alex Woolf

This chapter will deal with the origin of the people known as the Britons as defined under the headword ‘Briton, n.1. A member of one of the Brittonic-speaking peoples originally inhabiting all of Britain south of the Firth of Forth, and in later times *spec*. Strathclyde, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany’ in the *OED*, rather than the neologistic sense which has gradually displaced it and become more common since the late-seventeenth century as applied to inhabitants or citizens of Great Britain or the United Kingdom. The principal argument here will be that this identity came into being in the course of Late Antiquity (i.e. *c.* AD 300–700). Parts of this argument will contest the essentialist view that medieval British culture represents a direct continuity from pre-Roman identity on the island, which, it is suggested, would have been far from homogenous. Equally, however, this argument will contest the view that the medieval Britons were the direct cultural heirs of the Romano-British population. Britishness, like Englishness, was a product of the fragmentation of the Western Roman Empire.

It has long been recognized that medieval Britons derived their culture from a mixture of Roman and Celtic heritage. Whilst Welsh, for example, is classed as a Celtic language it contains more than 900 words borrowed from Latin during Antiquity, including terms for quite prosaic items such as ‘fish’, in sharp contrast to the mere dozen or so words borrowed from Celtic into Old English. The British language also displayed a greatly

simplified morpho-syntactical structure, as compared to its contemporary Celtic cousin Old Irish, which was probably brought about by a degree of creolization between Latin and the Celtic dialects it encountered in Britain.[1] In this chapter I will look at both the way in which British identity was constructed out of Roman and Celtic elements, and the way in which the Late Antique Britons understood that relationship. I will argue, inter alia, that from as early as the mid-sixth century, when Gildas, writing in Latin, attempted to reconstruct recent history from fragmentary sources, the relationship between Romano-British of the imperial era and the people who self-identified as Britons had begun to be misunderstood. The chapter will go on to explore how that misunderstanding has fed into modern problems in disentangling the history of the fifth to seventh centuries, and re-open questions about the relationship between the 'Celtic West' and those parts of south-eastern Britain which experienced the greatest impact of Romanization. In part I shall be revisiting a paper I published in 2003 and attempting to identify the shortcomings of my own interpretation at that time.[2] How *Romanitas* informed British identity and how the Britons wished to recall their Roman roots were two different phenomena, and these will be discussed in tandem.

A significant element in the misdirection exercised by our sources comes from the unitary treatment of Britain by narrative writers of the Roman period, none of whom, it should be recalled, were resident in Britain and few, if any, of whom had visited the island. Accounts of the conquest of Britain use the term *Britannia* for both the province (and later the diocese) and the island as a whole. This will have made it difficult, perhaps impossible, for Late Antique and medieval readers to draw the conclusion modern scholars have drawn—based on a complete knowledge of the sources and more particularly of the archaeology—that the two were not coterminous. Modern scholars tend to think that the Roman Empire in Britain stopped at Hadrian's Wall, or occasionally the Antonine Wall that runs between the Clyde and the Forth. This problem will have been compounded by Roman writers usually referring to trouble with the northern tribes as 'revolts' rather than 'invasions', as in Herodian's account of the trouble that brought Severus to Britain in 208.[3]

The most striking impact of this historiographical tradition upon medieval understandings of British history, apparent from Gildas, writing in the sixth century, onwards, was the belief that the Picts had entered the

island after the Roman conquest. They first appear in our extant sources as late as AD 297.[4] The building of Hadrian's Wall was seen as a response to a transmarine invasion.[5] Indeed, from the fourth century onwards, its building had been ascribed to Septimius Severus,[6] and Gildas even seems to have dated its construction to the period after the usurpation of Magnus Maximus (383–8).[7] Modern students of Roman Britain have long been aware that both these assumptions are false, but our certitude is based upon the analysis of archaeological evidence either unavailable to our predecessors or opaque with regard to interpretation. My argument here is that south of Hadrian's Wall we have been less willing to recognize the disconnect between the archaeological evidence and the textual tradition, and the way in which access to the former has created interpretative frameworks for us that would have been impossible for Late Antique and medieval writers to imagine.

In my 2003 paper 'The Britons: from Romans to barbarians', I placed the emergence of 'Welsh' identity entirely within the post-imperial period, understood as the period after about AD 409 when the officers of Constantine III were expelled by a British rebellion.[8] With regards to the linguistic issues I used the model of the impact of French on English in the period following the Norman Conquest. During the period of imperial rule, the argument went, upwardly mobile individuals and households adopted Latin speech and mixed with empire-wide actors. After the break with the Continent, Latin speakers had to re-orient themselves by engaging in legitimizing discourses with their social inferiors against whom they could no longer rely upon the protection of the Roman state. Social inequality had to be renegotiated using tropes that met the expectations of those at the lower end of the social scale, and property owners became redistributive chieftains or were replaced by those who were willing to fulfil that role. As part of this process, as in late-medieval England, the aristocracy gradually came to use the vernacular of the masses, but in doing so created a new acrolect, or aspirational form of the vernacular, that was heavily impacted upon by their original Romance speech patterns. This, I argued, explained the large numbers of Latin loanwords and the imperfect reproduction of morphosyntax in neo-Brittonic.

A problem with this model was that it seemed too compressed. As Thomas Charles-Edwards has demonstrated, a written British standard was

already in place by the end of the sixth century at the very latest, and this standard displays a completed neo-Brittonic transition with all the innovations, lexical and morpho-syntactical, in place.[9] A further issue was geographical. Most of our evidence for neo-Brittonic and for the apparent social transformation that I had outlined appeared to be in areas where Romanization was minimal: western Wales, Cornwall, and, in the North, the region between the Roman walls. I had bound my model for linguistic change very closely to my understanding of socio-political change and, like others before me, had sought the emergence of kingship in the post-imperial period. Kings certainly existed by Gildas' time and he makes it clear that some of the kings he knew were the sons of kings but I, and most of my colleagues, assumed that kingship had emerged since 409.[10] A popular view, following, to some extent, the work of John Morris in the 1970s, imagined all of Britain divided into kingdoms ruled by Celtic warlords by Gildas' time.[11] I had already argued in 2003 that the fact that, of the five kings whom Gildas identified, the three whose geographical location seems fairly secure were all located in the far West (Cornwall, Dyfed, and Gwynedd) might suggest otherwise. This caution was perhaps supported by Gildas' assertion that a king located in Gwynedd was almost the most powerful in Britain,[12] making it unlikely that the wealthier western lowlands (from Dorset to Cheshire, at least), apparently still in British hands in the early- to mid-sixth century, were ruled by kings.

Since 2003, based largely upon reading about other border regions of the later Roman Empire, I have become less convinced that kingship in the extremities of Britain necessarily dated to the post-imperial period. Whilst client kings of the early Empire were mostly snuffed out by the end of the first century AD, we see them beginning to re-emerge in border areas in the third and fourth centuries. One of the earliest and most famous examples of this new breed of border king was Odaenathus of Palmyra. In the Hellenistic and early Roman era Palmyra had been a *polis* republic, ruled by a city council with elected magistrates holding office annually. It was incorporated first into the Roman province of Syria, and from the 190s into the new province of Phoenicia. Following the rise of a new invigorated Persian threat under the Sassanid dynasty from the 220s onwards, coupled with a weaker Roman military, the city gradually became more proactive in defence of its region, and Odaenathus, who first appears as 'exarch', eventually assumed kingship. The extent to which this

was a personal usurpation, a civic decision, or a Roman grant is unclear. Odaenathus eventually fell out with the Romans, and the kingdom was suppressed after a brief period when his sons and widow ruled.[13] In the fourth and fifth centuries, however, other kings appear on the fringes of the Empire, most notably in the same Syrian region where several Arab dynasties produced kings who served with and in the Roman administration. Sons of these kings often spent time at the imperial court or serving in the regular army before taking up the royal office. These kings patronized local cities, founding churches and endowing public buildings.[14] In the West a particularly interesting example is the Moorish king Flavius Nubel. Nubel is mentioned as a *regulus* by Ammianus Marcellinus, who refers to him in connection with the rebellion of his son Firmus. Otherwise much of what we know about Nubel comes from an inscription on a Christian basilica which he dedicated in the city of Rasguniae, modern Tamentfoust on the Algerian coast. In this inscription he records his own gift to the church of a piece of the True Cross, his parents' names and his father's rank (*comes*), and the name of his wife. He also mentions that he had commanded a cavalry unit in the Roman army. Ammianus tells us that he had become *'regulus per nationes Mauricas potentissimus'*, 'a most powerful kinglet of the Moorish nation', and that his own tribe were the Iubaleni whose lands lay some 150km south-east of Rasguniae, though still well within the Roman frontier.[15] One of Nubel's many sons, Gildo, went on to become Count of Africa from 386 to his overthrow by Stilicho in 398.

It seems to me that Flavius Nubel probably provides us with a plausible model for the emergence of British kingship in Late Antiquity. The third and fourth centuries saw an increasing abandonment or reduction of regular army installations in Wales and, for what it is worth, no garrisons are mentioned in the region in the *Notitia Dignitatum.*[16] This same period saw a gradual but significant evolution of the organization of the regular army into what have become known in the modern literature as the *limitanei* and the *comitatenses*, often translated as 'frontier troops' and 'field army'. Both groups were regular soldiers of high quality and it was possible for units to be moved from one category to the other, but broadly speaking the former were retained in their provinces of origin and recruitment, close to the frontier, whilst the latter were moved about the empire as required. The *comitatenses* were frequently billeted in cities

rather than in specifically military installations.[17] According to the *Notitia*, the *limitanei* in Britain seem to have been confined to what is now northern England, under the *dux Britanniae*, or the south-east coast, under the *comes littoris Saxonici per Britanniam.* Nine units of *comitatenses* under the command of the *comes Britanniae* are noted, and these were probably billeted in southern cities. The defence of western Britain south of the Mersey is not clearly accounted for.

It seems plausible to argue that in regions where Romanization, in the form of urban life and villa-centred estates, had remained relatively under-developed, *reguli* after the fashion of Nubel and his Saracen contemporaries may have been encouraged to develop. Such men may well have been the predecessors of Gildas' kings and have provided local defence, functioned as magistrates within their *pagi*, and supplied recruits to the regular army. We might imagine some of them as having served, like Nubel himself, in the regular army before inheriting, or being appointed to, their kingship. A constant flow of such men and their companions into imperial service and back to their *pagus* of origin may well have created a mechanism for linguistic and cultural Romanization, which would lack the material hallmarks we associate with urban and villa life. At the risk of straying into legendary matter, I cannot help but draw attention to the famous description of Arthur in *Historia Brittonum* §56: '*tunc arthur pugnabat contra illos in illis diebus cum regibus brittonum, sed ipse erat dux bellorum*', 'then Arthur fought against them [i.e. the Saxons] in those days, with the kings of the Britons, but he was their leader in war.' Seeing the kings of the Britons in this passage as Nubel-like local magistrates with some military functions rather than as powerful rulers, and Arthur as a Roman commander of the regular army, based further to the east, might make some sense.[18]

Legendary speculations aside, Nubel-type kings ruling small territories in the non-urbanized fringes of the Empire might well have emerged in Britain by the end of the fourth century if not before, and need not be seen as a post-Roman development. The existence of such kings in Wales, the intramural zone, and, perhaps, Cornwall (probably lying beyond the western frontiers of the Dumnonian city state based on Exeter[19]), may even have created regional power and social networks that were more resilient when the imperial-wide system collapsed. This picture of the late Roman West and North of Britain is in stark contrast to what we see in the

southern and eastern parts of the diocese. Whilst noted in passing by those interested in archaeological distribution maps, what has perhaps not been emphasized enough is the extent to which the region in which Germanic-speaking settlement seems to have taken hold by the mid-sixth century (as evidenced by funerary archaeology) maps almost exactly onto the regions where urbanism and villa-type settlements proliferated under Roman rule.[20] In 1997, Ken and Petra Dark published a map in their book on *The Landscape of Roman Britain* which showed how closely the distribution of villas mapped onto the distribution of pre-conquest coins minted by the dominant pre-conquest British polities of the Trinovantes and Catuvellauni.[21] Taken together we see an enduring south-eastern zone, roughly bounded by the Fosse Way, that endured for more than half a millennium.

The boundaries of these regions were of course fluid and, as I pointed out in 2003, the most puzzling area is the middle strip running north from Dorset and into the West Midlands, in which there is little evidence in our period for either stereotypically British or Saxon material culture. This in itself suggests that a dichotomy would have existed in Late Antique Britain between the West and the rest even without Saxon immigrants. In crude terms the 'frontier' of the heavily Romanized zone, which, as the Darks pointed out, coincided closely with the hegemonic sphere of the late pre-Roman kings of the south-east, ran roughly along the line of the Fosse Way (largely co-extensive with the A46 trunk road), with an extension into the southern parts of the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Medieval writers, from the author of *Historia Brittonum* onwards, were puzzled by the fact that if, as Gildas had claimed, the *Saxones* were invited into Britain to protect the citizens from the *Picti* and *Scotti*, they nevertheless established kingdoms in the part of the island least exposed to attacks from these two groups. The idea dominant from Bede onwards that the first settlement had been in Kent, from which troops were sent to the northern frontier, may simply reflect Canterbury's role in controlling the narrative,[22] but if any truth lies behind it, the narrative might imply that it was Continental forces who were most feared at this point. In terms of material culture recognizably 'Anglo-Saxon', sites, mostly cemeteries, spread rapidly across the south-eastern parts of the island, delineated above, in the fifty years or so after, at the latest, *c*.470.[23]

Linguistic evidence can also be deployed here. As noted above Old English famously has very few Celtic loanwords, but it does have many Latin loans. Some of these Latin words, such as the word *Peht* (Pict) and *ceaster* (walled Roman settlement), seem to have been borrowed early and directly from vernacular Romance. Peter Schrijver has even suggested that there is a Romance substratum in Old English. To this we may add the use of the term *wealas* to denote the natives by Old English speakers. Elsewhere in Germanic-speaking Europe this term was and is used only to denote Romance speakers, and it has been loaned into some Slavic languages with a similar meaning.[24] Modern Polish Włochy, for example, denotes Italy. It seems fairly clear that despite the old saw that this word means 'foreigner', it meant, rather, more specifically, 'Roman', and its use in Britain would indicate that the *Saxones* encountered recognizably Roman people when they arrived. I have suggested elsewhere that the borrowing of British **Combrogi*, specifically into northern Old English, whence modern English Cumbrian, etc., may suggest that at some times, and in some places, the Anglo-Saxons distinguished more Romanized from less Romanized Britons.[25] The fact that this distinction did not emerge in southern Britain may have been because the transition between the fully Romanized landscape of the east and the country of kings to the west was gradual, and perhaps barely perceptible as the English pushed west during the later sixth to eighth centuries. This does not mean, however, that in the fifth and sixth centuries this was not a real distinction, both linguistically and in terms of political and social culture, between these two zones.

A division between two zones, however, runs the risk of being over-simplistic. The boundaries between these regions may not have been clear-cut, with much of western England and southern Wales perhaps displaying aspects of both kinds of social organization. A third region also needs to be taken into account. The military reforms of the early-fourth century had created a series of border commands across the Empire which to some extent over-rode local civil government. In Britain the command of the *Dux Britanniae* probably covered two or three provinces comprising, so far as we can tell, the territory between the Humber and Hadrian's Wall.[26] The *Dux* almost certainly had his headquarters at York and, according to the *Notitia Dignitatum*, commanded thirty-nine units of various sorts along the line of the wall and in its hinterland. Some of these units, like

the VI Legion at York, had been stationed in the same place for centuries, others were relatively new. Whilst the *Dux* himself, and presumably many of the other senior officers, will have been imperial aristocrats in Britain for limited tours of duty,[27] the vast majority of the soldiers will have been recruited within Britain, many being the sons of veterans and others perhaps recruited from beyond the frontier. City states did exist in this region: there was a *colonia* across the river from the legionary fortress at York (perhaps most recruits into the VI Legion were citizens of this polity?), the Brigantian capital at Aldborough (near Ripon), the Carvetii at Carlisle, and the Parisi at Brough in the East Riding and probably, by the fourth century, at Corbridge. The region had at least one civil governor too, but the *Dux* had judicial and governmental powers devolved from the Emperor which overlay these local structures.

In cultural terms, then, this frontier shared some features with the zone of city states to its south, and some features with those regions which I have argued had been devolved to *reguli*, i.e. those in the west and perhaps also in the region between the wall and the Forth.[28] It is unclear whether this reflects usage within the Roman period itself. In both the *ducatus* and the regions ruled by *reguli*, British rather than Roman identity reinforced itself through the localism of power structures and economic relations. Taxation will have largely been in kind, *annona*, and delivered directly to those providing defence. Soldiers will have been recruited locally, and whilst some of these may at times have transferred to *comitatenses* units, few other than the most senior officers will have passed in the other direction.

This change in the way Roman frontiers worked coincided with the spread of Christianity across the Empire and, as elsewhere, these processes may have encouraged the development of vernacular acrolects. We tend to think of the Roman Empire as divided between a Latin West and a Greek East with local languages gradually giving way to one or other of these metropolitan languages, but in Late Antiquity this process was reversed. To a large extent this seems to have been the result of the needs of Christian ministry and we see, for example, Gothic and Ge'ez gaining literary forms in the fourth century, and a new standardized orthography for Armenian being introduced in the early-fifth century. As well as the emergence of new written languages we also see an increased literary use of scripts and acrolects previously confined to epigraphy for languages

like Syriac.[29] Perhaps the best well-attested parallel for the British situation is (rather surprisingly) Egypt, a frontier diocese of much the same size as Britain. There Late Antiquity saw two literary and linguistic cultures evolving side by side. One was Greek, a colonial language, which dominated in cities close to the Mediterranean, like Alexandria, and was widely used by imperial officials and officers. The other, Coptic, was a native vernacular that only emerged as a fully fledged written acrolect with the rise of Christianity. This dominated the countryside and urban centres further up the Nile.[30] Egypt, like Britain, had a *dux* established in the 'Upper' province, with Thebes playing the role of York, while the semi-barbarian, Christianizing polities emerging in Nubia were reminiscent, in their relationship with the Empire, of the British kingdoms emerging in the intramural zone. In all these frontier regions of the Empire the needs of Christian mission seem to have reversed the process, ongoing since the era of conquest, which privileged the spread of Latin or Greek at the expense of local languages.[31] The long-term effect of this process was often to lead to schism within the Church as theologies and liturgies became bedded down in different linguistic environments, which did not always stand the test of nuanced comparison.[32]

Returning to the specific case of Britain, we can see that these processes, partly the result of the fourth-century development of a 'defence in depth' strategy at the frontier and partly the result of the spread of Christian mission, will have increased the cultural contrast between much of the southern and eastern part of the diocese and the frontier zones. So far, my analysis has focused on the frontier, but if we consider the situation in the south and east we should probably imagine the Romancing and Romanization continuing apace as it had done since the early Empire. Not only the elites but probably many of the peasantry as well were probably speaking Latin or Latin-based vernaculars by the early-fifth century. Pockets of Celtic speakers may have survived, interspersed with the urban and suburban populations, but their dialects will have fragmented due to the lack of interaction with the centripetal force of an established acrolect and will have become progressively less useful in interactions beyond the purely local. Most soldiers whom the inhabitants of this region will have encountered would have been *comitatenses* units drawn from all over the Empire, using Latin or at least non-British languages such as Germanic. These units will for the most part

have been billeted in cities, a factor which may have contributed to the withdrawal of local elites from urban life; what self-respecting gentleman would wish to expose his teenage daughters to so many foreign soldiers? *Comitatenses* units would also be those most likely to be moved back and forth across the Channel, so localization was less likely to set in than with the *limitanei*. The long-term effect of this would have been that the city-states located south and east of the Fosse Way would perhaps have had more in common with those communities of central and southern Gaul, which often seem to dominate discourse about the Late Antique West, than they would with the frontier regions to the west and north.

As noted above, the boundary between these two Britains may not have been clear-cut: much of western England, southern Wales, and perhaps southern and eastern Yorkshire may have been transitional, more Roman and Romance than the West but less so than the south-east. What we cannot know is whether the development of these two Britains, moving along very different trajectories in the fourth and fifth centuries, led to suspicion and/or hostility between the two 'nations'. When the diocesan council met, at London or Cirencester, did senators from Colchester and Canterbury look down their noses at those from Carmarthen and Carlisle? Were western *reguli*, or perhaps even regular army officers from the frontier, visiting the east on diplomatic or shopping trips, regarded as little better than the barbarians from whom they protected the lowlanders? And how did the hardy men and women of the frontier regard their neighbours beyond the Fosse Way? Were they viewed as effete and pampered, undeserving, perhaps, of the luxuries they enjoyed?

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned the paradox that had puzzled medieval writers: if the Saxons were brought into Britain to defend the diocese against the Picts and Scots then why were they settled in the part of the island most distant from those particular barbarians? Archaeologically the transition from Roman to Saxon in this region is impossible to date closely for a variety of reasons. The disappearance of significant amounts of newly minted coins and fine ware pottery after the 420s makes the precise dating of sites of late Roman character almost impossible. Similarly, while the appearance of metalwork produced in an identifiably 'Germanic' style can be said, fairly securely, to have happened by the 470s, the rapidity of the transition, locally or across the region, between say 425 and 475, has proved, so far, impossible to track.[33] What

we can say, however, is that this late-fifth- to early-sixth-century ‘first English horizon’ coincides extremely closely with that part of the diocese which was most Romanized and most dependent during the late Empire on transient *comitatenses* troops for its defence. The question has to be asked: if Gildas’ narrative is correct and the first Saxons were invited to Britain to defend those Britons who were, in Gildas’ words, ‘totally ignorant of all the usages of war’,[34] from whom were they being defended?

Gildas, like most commentators since—who, after all, have regarded him as the principal witness—seems to have been unaware of the two Britains which I have tried to describe and identify in this chapter. My contention would be that he has conflated and combined narratives from two distinct communities, and that in effect his own perspective ‘flipped’ without his being aware of it. In his own time he was clearly engaged with a British community which drew most of its culture and traditions from the frontier, the world of *reguli* and distinctive ecclesiastical traditions, yet he depended for much of his fifth-century narrative on source material relating to the other Britain, beyond the Fosse Way, which by his era was under Saxon occupation. Is it possible that as imperial control began to slip away, and after the money supply came to an end, and perhaps after most of the *comitatenses* had been withdrawn to engage in Continental conflict, the soldiers on the frontier—the *limitanei* and the armies of the *reguli*—were seen as a threat to the comfortable life of those in the south and east? Gildas writes of the constant threat of Picts and Scots but there is in fact no evidence that the northern frontier was over-run in the fifth century. The early-medieval kingdoms in the intramural zone seem to present a direct continuity from the Roman-period tribes and, as Rob Collins has shown, there is no evidence for a sudden collapse along the line of the Wall.[35] Of course, sea-borne raids occurred, but nothing suggests that these posed an existential threat to provincial life.

In short, it seems likely to me that the forebears of Gildas’ Britons may themselves have been the enemies against whom the *ciues* of ‘Roman’ Britain employed their Saxon mercenaries, and that the roots of ‘England’ pre-date the arrival of the English and lie in the provincial life of Roman Britain. The inability or unwillingness of Continental Roman commentators to distinguish between categories of post-conquest Britons —Celtic-speaking warriors and Roman provincials—may have misled Gildas and all subsequent writers. Dependent on a limited selection of

Roman-period literary texts and classicizing models Gildas and his followers constructed an essentialist image of Britishness that sat ill with the lived experience of medieval Britons. This dual heritage emerges time and again amongst Welsh writers in both the vernacular, like the authors of the Four Branches of the *Mabinogi* and *Breudwydd Macsen Wledig*, and Latin, such as Gerald of Wales. The Welsh, as the Britons became, were unique in being both Romans and barbarians. In my 2003 article, I began by suggesting, provocatively, that the killing of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd—the last independent Welsh king—in 1282 marked the final passing of the Western Roman Empire into barbarian hands.[36] This was of course, in most respects, a ludicrous conceit. Even at the height of imperial control the lands that would become Gwynedd were about as marginal as territory could be. Llywelyn, and other Welsh rulers, did however claim descent from Roman Emperors, and saw themselves as part of a Classical inheritance, but they reimagined the nature of that Classical world to the extent that it too was barbaric.

Alex Woolf, *British Ethnogenesis: A Late Antique Story* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0002

[1] Charles-Edwards (2013) 75–115.

[2] A. Woolf (2003) 345–80.

[3] Ireland (2008) 113.

[4] The Picts are first mentioned by Eumenius in a panegyric to Constantius Chlorus. See now also A. Woolf (2017).

[5] For interpretations of Hadrian's Wall up to the modern era, see Hingley's chapter in this volume.

[6] Ireland (2008) 117–18, for citations from Eutropius, Jerome, and Orosius to this effect. Orosius was Gildas' main source for imperial history.

[7] *De Excidio Britanniae* 15, references from Winterbottom (1978). Hereafter *DEB.*

[8] I should note that I am now very sceptical of dates around AD 409 as signalling the end of imperial control in Britain and would favour a date closer to the middle of the fifth century, but this is not the place to expound that view in detail.

[9] Charles-Edwards (2013) 76–89.

[10] E.g. Dumville (1995).

[11] E.g. Snyder (1998).

[12] *DEB* 33.2.

[13] Smith (2013).

[14] Fisher (2011).

[15] Blackhurst (2004); Fournier (2012).

[16] Arnold and Davies (2000) 24–34. The absence of Welsh garrisons in the *Notitia* may not be significant since there is some debate about the comprehensiveness of the text as it survives today, and not all units allocated to Britain are located at specific sites.

[17] Strobel (2011).

[18] See Halsall (2013) for the most recent sensible assessment of the historical Arthur.

[19] Gildas describes Constantine, the first king he names, as the 'whelp of the Damnonian lioness' (*'leaenae damnoniae catulus'*) and this has usually been taken to mean that he was king of Dumnonia. Both English and Welsh sources, however, seem to have regarded Cornwall and Dumnonia as separate regions, and the use of the term 'whelp' might imply that Constantine's realm was a satellite tagged onto the greater Dumnonia.

[20] A general sense of this relationship can be got by comparing the maps on pp. 38 and 80 of Higham and Ryan (2013).

[21] Dark and Dark (1997) 66.

[22] A. Woolf (2018).

[23] There is a problem with the chronology of the mid-fifth century in south-eastern Britain where it has proved hard, on typological grounds, to date Romano-British material later than about 430 and 'Anglo-Saxon' material earlier than about 470. This said, no one imagines an empty landscape between these dates and so it is likely that these dates are too conservative and that the transition lies somewhere between them. See Gerard (2013). For a recent discussion of the zoning, see Blair (2018) 24–35.

[24] See A. Woolf (2010) 230–2.

[25] A. Woolf (2010) 230–2.

[26] Collins (2012) 39–41.

[27] We know, for certain, the identity of only one *Dux Britanniae*, Fullofaudes, whose name is Germanic. Dulcitius, who was probably his successor, bears a fully Roman name. Both are named by Ammianus Marcellinus, XXVIII.3; see Ireland (2008) 148–50, for translation.

[28] Though here we rely on retrospective evidence for the early Middle Ages which regards the inhabitants of the intramural zone as Britons, and places the Picts further to the north.

[29] Shepardson (2009).

[30] Choat (2009).

[31] A. Woolf (1998).

[32] A. Woolf (2016) 233–4.

[33] Gerrard (2013) 249–62.

[34] *'omnis belli usus ignara penitus'*, *DEB* §14.

[35] Halsall (2009) for the intramural zone and Collins (2012) for the Wall.

[36] A. Woolf (2003).

3

Romans, Britons, and the Construction of ‘Anglo-Saxon’ Identity

Michael D.J. Bintley

From the perspective of Bede’s readers from at least the eighth century onwards, when Rome fell in Britain, it fell hard. This is reflected in historical traditions on both ‘sides’ of the subsequent power struggles, internal and external, that took place between polities that have been identified for scholarly convenience as British or ‘Anglo-Saxon’. Despite the Romano-Celtic hybridity of much medieval British culture (see previous chapter), the works of Gildas, writing in the mid-sixth century, and the author of the *Historia Brittonum*, in the ninth, both indicate a clear sense of separation between the Romans who had departed, and the British who had been left to fend for themselves.[1] Bede and those who drew upon him, as he had drawn upon Gildas, reflect the same story, of a division between the Romans who had departed, and the British with whom they fought, collaborated, and whom they called *wealas*.[2] Scholarship continues to debate the manner in which much of lowland Britain became linguistically and culturally ‘Anglo-Saxon’, and quite what this means; whether Britain rejected Rome, as Michael Jones has argued, whether the British military elite were supplanted by Germanic-speaking rulers, as Nicholas Higham posits, whether there was a complete collapse of authority, as Neil Faulkner has claimed, or whether, as Ken Dark argues, a significant degree of continuity was maintained in the transition from late-Roman to early-medieval Britain.[3] This chapter is not about what happened during this period, but rather about what people living in

England from the eighth to eleventh centuries *thought* had happened, and the way in which they exploited this narrative in the construction of ethnic and cultural identity.[4] Understanding approaches to Britons and Romans in the early Middle Ages is an exercise in understanding how early English culture attempted to come to terms with the British who were still present, and the Romans who were not. The two are frequently considered in isolation, but—as far as mid- and late-Saxon England are concerned—less often in the same breath. This chapter will show that the absence of Rome, coupled with the return of the Roman Church, allowed the occupation of spaces that Rome had vacated: religious, cultural, intellectual, and geographical. It will discuss the ways in which politically dominant peoples in early-medieval England used the past to construct identity by selectively erasing and adopting markers of British and Roman culture, paying particular attention to one of the symbolic stages upon which this was played out—the towns of post-Roman Britain, both real and imagined.

Rome looms large in early English written sources, and in a sense largest in the well-known representation of Romans as the giants who had constructed the walled settlements, forts, villas, and roads that existed in varying states of disrepair throughout much of the landscape.[5] Tyler Bell has demonstrated that responses to these buildings in the late-sixth and seventh centuries included burials that showed an awareness of these structures as buildings, rather than burial mounds, at sites including villas (like Norton Disney) and grander edifices like the palace at Fishbourne.[6] Morbid associations with these places are equally apparent in the literary record, though so too is an awareness of the communities they once supported. The Exeter Book elegy *The Ruin*, committed to vellum not long before the turn of the millennium, begins by establishing the image of a splendid stone foundation that is swept to the earth within the same line:[7]

> *Wrætlic is þes wealstan, wyrde gebræcon,*
> *burgstede burston; brosnað enta geweorc.*
> *Hrofas sind gehrorene, hreorge torras,*
> *hrungeat berofen hrim on lime,*
> *scearde scurbeorge scorene, gedrorene,*
> *ældo undereotone.*[8]
>
> Splendid is this wallstone, fate-broken,

> the city buildings burst apart, the work of giants crumbled.
> The rooves are collapsed, the towers tumbled,
> the barred gate broken and frost in the plaster,
> ceilings agape, torn, collapsed,
> and consumed by age. (lines 1–6)

Here the reader or listener is supplied with a brief checklist of all the elements that contemporaries clearly identified with Roman settlements, namely rooves (presumably of the tiled kind also found in place-names) and towers like the Multangular tower at York that were in some cases a foundation for the work of later medieval builders.[9] The poem continues by juxtaposing images of present desolation against past glory, showing clear understanding of how some Roman buildings were constructed using iron clamps seated in lead (lines 18–20). The same sense of desolation encapsulated by these buildings is visible elsewhere in the Exeter Book poem *The Wanderer*, again with reference to stone buildings whose ruins are similarly referred to as the works of giants. The poet writes that:

> *Ongietan sceal gleaw hæle hu gæstlic bið*
> *þonne ealre þisse worulde wela weste stondeð,*
> *swa nu missenlice geond þisne middangeard*
> *winde biwaune weallas stondaþ,*
> *hrime bihrorene, hryðge þa ederas.*
> *Woniað þa winsalo, waldend licgað*
> *dreame bidrorene, duguð eal gecrong,*
> *wlonc bi wealle.*[10]
>
> The wise man will perceive how terrible it shall be when all
> this world stands in waste, as now in various places
> throughout this middle earth, wind-blown, walls stand,
> frost-covered, ruined buildings. The wine halls crumble,
> leaders lie lifeless, deprived of joys, the troop all fallen,
> proud by the wall. (lines 73–80)

It is not immediately obvious that these buildings are stone structures, and the reference to them as *winsalo* is misleading if misunderstood (as, for example, wooden halls), encapsulating as it does the former function of

these buildings juxtaposed with their present state of desolation. The vernacular literary record, then, has plenty to say about the origins of these stone places, built by the hands of *entas* ('giants').[11] Each of these works also notes the circumstances in which these buildings were left empty: as a consequence of plague and warfare in *The Ruin*, though only due to violent conflict in *The Wanderer*. As I have argued elsewhere, however, neither of these works has anything to say about the specific circumstances in which their former inhabitants met their end—these are passed over in silence.[12]

However, one might not expect this kind of elegiac verse to celebrate the deaths and killing of the British who had once occupied them. This is left for works like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle poem which celebrates the victory of a combined force of West Saxons and Mercians over Scots and Viking armies at the Battle of Brunanburh in 937, and concludes by revelling in the scale of the slaughter:

> *Ne wearð wæl mare*
> *on þis eiglande æfre gieta*
> *folces gefylled beforan þissum*
> *sweordes ecgum, þæs þe us secgað bec,*
> *ealde uðwitan, siþþan eastan hider*
> *Engle and Seaxe up becoman,*
> *ofer brad brimu Brytene sohtan,*
> *wlance wigsmiþas, Wealas ofercoman,*
> *eorlas arhwate eard begeatan.*[13]
>
> There has never yet been a greater slaughter
> of people killed on this island
> ever yet before this
> by the edges of swords, as books tell us
> old wise counsellors, since from the east here
> came the Angles and Saxons
> seeking Britain over the broad ocean,
> proud war-smiths, glorious earls,
> who overcame the Wealas, and won this land. (lines 65–73)

In contrast with the elegies, this view of the fate of Britain following the *adventus* is far more in keeping with the circumstances described in Gildas in the early-/mid-sixth century, and re-presented by Bede in his *Historia* of *c*.731. Indeed, the picture Gildas and Bede paint encouraged a view of mass migration supplanting the British populace which, although questioned by writers since the eighteenth century, and no longer thought to have been the case, still dominates popular consciousness of the period.[14] The polemic of Gildas draws explicitly on Jeremiah and other Old Testament prophets who had foreseen the destruction of cities like Jerusalem. Gildas has the Saxons arrive as mercenaries, rebel against their master (c. 23), and spread fire throughout the land from sea to sea (c. 24), an act which he deems just punishment for the sins of the British. Battering rams lay low the towns of Britain, altars are desecrated, and the bodies of ecclesiastical and lay people alike lie unburied in their ruins. Survivors are caught, butchered, or enslaved before (as Gildas reports) Ambrosius Aurelianus brings an end to the enemy's advance (cc. 25–6). As Gildas writes, this is all well and good, '*sed ne nunc quidem, ut antea, civitates patriae inhabitantur; sed desertae dirutaeque hactenus squalent … '* ('but the cities of our land are not populated even now as they once were; right to the present they are deserted, in ruins and unkempt … ').[15]

The section of Bede's narrative corresponding with these events, though separated by his account of the life of St Germanus, otherwise follows it closely. The true intention of the mercenaries who land in three ships at the behest of Vortigern is not masked (I.15), and within the same chapter of the *Historia* that sees their arrival, they have kindled a fire which burns throughout the land, seen the towns fall into ruin (now home only to the bodies of the unburied dead), and enslaved or killed all of those who fled this cataclysm. Bede follows this with a brief account of Aurelianus and the battle of Mount Badon (c. 16), before moving on to the Pelagian heresy, the miracles of St Germanus and his visit to the shrine of Alban, the so-called 'Alleluia' victory, and the end of Germanus' life in Ravenna. Bede returns to the British at the time of Gildas, to note that although Britain had experienced respite from foreign wars, civil wars continued, and '*manebant exterminia ciuitatum ab hoste derutarum ac desertarum … '* ('the ruins of the cities destroyed and abandoned by the enemy still remained … ').[16] In I.12 of the Old English version of the *Historia* that was produced at around the time of Alfred the Great (871–

99), the account preceding these lines closely follows the Latin *Historia*, and thus includes Gildas' account of the 'three ships', the burning of Britain from shore to shore, and his account of the destruction of the towns. It continues by describing the victory of Aurelianus, who is described as a '*god mon gemetfæst, Romanisces cynnes mon*' ('good and moderate man, a man of Roman kin'), in terms that place anaphoric emphasis on the link between virtue, moderation, and *Romanitas*.[17] There is, however, no reference to the present state of ruin mentioned by Gildas or Bede, an omission which may suggest new and divergent approaches to walled towns towards the end of the ninth and tenth centuries (see below).

Elsewhere, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle that was begun at around the same time to further the power of Wessex confirms the significance of former Romano-British towns in the minds of contemporary readers as important staging-points in the rise of what was being newly promoted in an Insular context as an 'Anglo-Saxon' people.[18] For example, the Chronicle records that after the battle of Crayford in *c*.457, the British who had been defeated there by the armies of Hengest and Aesc '*flugon to Lundenbyrg*' ('retreated to the stronghold of London').[19] Later, in 491, the Roman shore fort at Pevensey, or 'Anderitum', was besieged by Aella, who '*ofslogon alle þa þe þærinne eardedon; ne wearþ þær forþon an Bret to lafe*' ('killed all of those who dwelt therein; there was not even one Briton left there').[20] A decade later, in 501, Port and his sons Bieda and Maegla came to (probably) Portchester, '*mid.ii. scipum*' ('with two ships') and '*ofslogon anne giongne bretiscmonnan, swiþe eþelne monnan*' ('killed a certain young British-man, a very noble man').[21] In 577, after the battle of Dyrham, Cuthwine and Ceawlin took Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath, and in 605, Aethelfrith took an army to Chester and '*ðar ofsloh unrim Walena*' ('there killed a countless number of Welsh').[22] Again, whether or not any of these events took place, or did so in the manner described, what this demonstrates is the way in which the military conquest of the British was inscribed into these former Roman places in the landscape. For contemporary readers, these *had been* Roman places, they had *become* British places, and, due to the moral turpitude of the British, they had been conquered by their own ancestors.[23]

This belies the fact that there is plenty of evidence from the early-Saxon period to indicate interaction, integration, and cooperation between

Britons and emerging polities whose elites spoke Old English. Place-names of Brittonic origin, though they are a 'tiny minority', as demonstrated by the 'sharp contrast' between areas of settlement and 'those areas where a Brittonic language continued in use', may indicate the presence of British-speaking peoples whose toponyms were absorbed into Germanic-speaking peoples' ways of describing the landscape.[24] As Richard Coates, Andrew Breeze, and David Horovitz have argued, there may be more major English place-names dating from 'before the advent of the Anglo-Saxons than is generally believed', a number of which 'enshrine such early names within a more complex English structure'.[25] In some high-status places like Anglian Yeavering, the adoption of a British site of ritual and power where successive generations of itinerant kings constructed their halls formed an important step in the assertion of control over the wider landscape.[26] In other areas, some have seen the lack of evidence for the 'traditional Germanic longhouse' found on the Continent and in Scandinavia, and the emergence of new forms in early-medieval England, as evidence of a hybrid Romano-British and Germanic architectural tradition, though Helena Hamerow argues that this architectural vocabulary, including structures such as sunken-featured buildings, is 'essentially derived from the Continental North Sea Zone'.[27] Other high-status sites such as the Mound 1 ship burial at Sutton Hoo accommodate a similar wealth of materials from a variety of cultures. Here, precious objects from Byzantium which had made their way north via the Mediterranean (like the Anastasius Dish) lay alongside some rooted in British traditions (such as the 'Celtic' hanging bowls) and others, such as the helmet, which had parallels elsewhere in Scandinavia and the North Sea zone.[28]

Again, this is hardly surprising, given the degree of interaction between peoples and polities indicated by written sources. Penda of Mercia, for example, benefited from cooperation with Cadwallon of Gwynedd in the seventh century, when the two joined forces to defeat and kill Edwin of Northumbria at the Battle of Hatfield Chase in 633. Edwin himself had been given protection by Gwynedd in his early years whilst Aethelfrith ruled Northumbria. Perhaps the most frequently discussed sources showing the presence of British people in early-medieval England, and more importantly as identifiably British people, are the laws of Ine of Wessex (promulgated between 688 and 693/4 and surviving as an appendix

to the Laws of Alfred), which stipulate the *wergild* prices for the killing of Britons, who although given legal status are attributed significantly less monetary value than Saxons.[29] Consideration of these various forms of evidence has contributed significantly to debates concerning change and continuity in early-/mid-Saxon England in various ways, but still encounters something of a stumbling block with regard to linguistic evidence, which has to account for the almost complete replacement of the Brittonic language(s) by Old English. Debate surrounding this topic must confront the view expressed forcefully by Richard Coates, who writes that he knows of '*no case where a political ascendancy has imposed its own language without significant impact from the language of the conquered*' (emphasis Coates), though he does also express some support for Peter Schrijver's suggestion that 'there is a British Celtic substratum underlying a north-western Romance substratum underlying Old English, at least in the lowland zone', suggesting the influence 'of a late-spoken Latin that was more or less identical with the Romance variety underlying Old French'.[30]

In the early-Saxon period there is then plenty of evidence for interaction between Britons and Saxons, and a good deal of evidence for integration between populations, whether this took place forcibly or otherwise. This does not, of course, sit easily in all areas, and there are many issues here that have yet to be reconciled. It is also demonstrably at odds with the historical commentary established by Gildas and adopted by Bede and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Bede's narrative further emphasizes the ephemerality of the Britons and the centrality of Rome to the conversion of England through his well-known account of Augustine of Canterbury's (d. 604) meeting with the British bishops on the borders of Wessex and the kingdom of the Hwicce.[31] Augustine initially demonstrates his supremacy by healing a blind man, symbolizing the restoration of heavenly light to the spiritually blind.[32] The British bishops who subsequently come to meet Augustine are enraged that he does not demonstrate humility by standing to meet them, and refuse to adapt their customs to those of the Roman Church. This leads Augustine to foretell their deaths—a prophecy fulfilled within the same chapter of the *Historia* by the slaughter of British priests at Chester by the aforementioned Aethelfrith.[33] Before this, according to Bede, Augustine had already begun the process of using Rome's most enduring monuments in Britain to re-

establish Roman religious authority in the landscape. Bede has Augustine demonstrate full knowledge of the reasons why the towns of Britain have fallen into such a state of disrepair. Having been granted a '*mansionem in ciuitate Doruuernensi*' ('dwelling place in the city of Canterbury'), Augustine and his entourage enter the city bearing an apotropaic silver cross and painted image of Christ on a panel. They sing:

> *Deprecamur te, Domine, in omni misericordia tua, ut auferatur furor tuus et ira tua a ciuitate ista et de domo sancta tua, quoniam peccauiumus. Alleluia.*
>
> We beseech Thee, O Lord, in Thy great mercy, that Thy wrath and anger may be turned away from this city and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned. Alleluia.[34]

Bede's portrayal of the conversion's opening shots not only emphasizes its *Romanitas*, therefore, but also positions it as a defiantly civic act, both in the sense that it is intended to develop civic community, *and* to emphasize the religion as one that occupies central and civic places, being quite literally opposed in the landscape to the beliefs of pagans or heathens in the countryside.

As well as being apparent from documentary sources, ecclesiastical reengagement with Roman places in the landscape is evident in the material record from the early stages of the conversion onwards. Kent provides especially good examples of these so-called early Augustinian rebuilds; at Richborough, an apsidal building nestles within the walls of the former Roman shore fort, close to the base of what is thought to have been a vast triumphal arch, one of the largest edifices in Roman Britain, and potentially constructed to mark the legendary site of the Claudian invasion.[35] Reculver, a shore fort on the north coast guarding the other end of the Wantsum Channel, was similarly home to an early church community.[36] In and around Canterbury, in addition to Christ Church cathedral, the church of St Martin makes pronounced use of Roman brick, the church of St Pancras reuses spoliated Roman columns, and the church of St Peter (within the walls), which similarly reuses Roman stonework, may also have been an early construction.[37] As Helen Gittos argues, the distribution and construction of churches in Canterbury may well have been executed in imitation of the distribution of churches in Rome, where Augustine himself had been prior of St Andrew's monastery (now San Gregorio Magno al Celio).[38] Further afield lies the chapel at Stone-by-

Faversham, built around a square Roman shrine,[39] and further along the route to London lies Rochester (Roman *Durobrivae*), where an early Episcopal seat was established, but where the archaeological evidence for the early-medieval cathedral, in McAleer's view, has proved inconclusive.[40] Early churches are attested elsewhere in former Roman towns. In London, these include St Paul's and St Martin-in-the-Fields, though no traces of the former survived the building of Wren's cathedral.[41] At York, Bede's *Historia* describes the building of a church for Edwin in 627, where excavations suggest that the first church was probably constructed in the area of the Roman *principia*, and near the later medieval Minster.[42] Elsewhere, as Gavin Speed notes, in a recent study arguing for the continuous occupation of some walled Roman towns, there is evidence for the creation of dioceses at Dorchester-on-Thames in 635, Winchester (the future capital of Wessex) in 648, and Leicester in the 670s.[43] Though these churches and their communities may have benefited from the existing significance of these places as central locations, and perhaps as more sizeable settlements, in areas where there was continuing life in towns (if not town life), it also seems highly likely that the Roman Church sought to re-establish itself in these places because they regarded them as Roman places. As a number of commentators have suggested, this seems to have been part of Gregory's plan to re-establish the spiritual empire of Rome in the ruins of its earthly counterpart. Following the model of Augustine of Hippo's *De Civitate Dei*, these earthly cities would in this way be taking their next step towards becoming the Heavenly City.

In addition to the archaeological and written record, prominent associations between cities, Romans, and Rome, are evident throughout works produced in late-Saxon contexts which suggest that the early 'English' saw themselves as rightful heirs to this aspect of the Roman tradition. In many ways, as Nicholas Howe argued in a seminal study, Rome was 'capital of Anglo-Saxon England', culturally, intellectually, and spiritually.[44] In the preface to the Old English translation of Gregory the Great's *Cura Pastoralis*, one of the earliest surviving vernacular prose works, Rome is presented as a conduit for divine wisdom flowing to the shores of Britain from the Holy Land through the written traditions of the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans. In this preface, King Alfred the Great reflects on the dilapidated state of learning in England, and

establishes a chain of communication between the Holy Land and England in which '*sio æ*' ('the law') passed through Hebrew, Greek, and Latin before being translated into English, establishing a chain of immediate authority between England and Rome.[45] The coming of this wisdom is presented as light passing from east to west, as all but inevitable, like the rising of the sun and its setting in *The Battle of Brunanburh*—or the 'Anglo-Saxon' *adventus* in the same poem. In the late-ninth and early-tenth centuries other Latin prose texts were translated that demonstrate the extent to which Roman intellectual culture had been refashioned for contemporary consumption. This process of repurposing Roman material is equally evident in a well-known passage from the Old English translation of Boethius' *Consolations of Philosophy*, in which the Roman hero Fabricius (whose name means 'craftsman' or 'smith') is substituted with the figure of Weland from Germanic legend (ON *Vǫlundr*), known elsewhere in early-medieval England from contexts such as the Franks Casket—itself an object carved with images from Germanic, Classical, and Biblical mythology:[46]

Hwa wat nu þæs wisan Welandes ban,
on hwelcum hlæwa hrusan þeccen?
Hwær is nu se rica Romana wita
and se aroda, þe we ymb sprecað,
hiora here-toga, se gehaten wæs
mid þæm burg-warum Brutus nemned?
Hwær is eac se wisa and se weorð-georna
and se fæst-ræda folces hyrde,
se wæs uðwita ælces ðinges,
cene and cræftig, þæm wæs Caton nama?[47]

Who knows now in which burial mound
the bones of wise Weland cover the floor?
Where is now the powerful and resolute
Roman counsellor about whom we speak,
their military leader, who was named
Brutus amongst the town-dwellers?
Where is also that wise and ambitious
and stalwart guardian of the people,

who was a philosopher in all ways,
fierce and skilful, whose name was Cato?

The Germanic mythological figure of Weland here, then, is brought into direct alignment with two other figures presumably familiar enough to the readership of the *Consolations* that their virtue required no further explanation.

The city of Rome itself is found at around this time in the Old English version of Orosius' *Historiarum Adversum Paganos Libri VII*, once attributed to the Alfredian circle like the Boethius, though this view has been challenged in recent years.[48] Almost every chapter in the Old English *Orosius* is temporally orientated by Rome, and begins with one of two formulae: '*ær ðæm ðe Romeburh getimbred wære*' ('before the city of Rome was built') or '*æfter ðæm ðe Romeburh getimbred wæs*' ('after the city of Rome was built').[49] Naturally, descriptions of Rome and Romans appear throughout.[50] Britain does not appear often, and the translator makes no effort to enhance or increase its presence in the Old English text. Aside from the conquest of Britain by Julius Caesar (v.5), probably the most sustained appearance is in the first chapter of the first book, which describes the geography of '*Britannia þæt igland*' ('the island of Britain', i.1), whilst there is a famously extended section on the geography of Scandinavia apparently recounted by Ohthere to '*his hlaforde, Ælfrede kynincge*' ('his lord, king Alfred').[51] Created in an Alfredian or post-Alfredian milieu, then, this is a text which foregrounds the centrality of Rome, as a city, to the intellectual, military, geographical, cultural, and religious life of the world. Like Heorot in *Beowulf*, it is the centre, albeit *the centre of Christendom*; all movement is to or from it, and the island of Britain, by contrast, is very much on the periphery.[52]

Rome and Romans have a similar status in the various manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which begin with Julius Caesar's expedition to Britain, followed closely by the Claudian invasion.[53] The sack of Rome by the Goths has a similar impact, being directly associated with the end of Roman rule in Britain (Chronicle MSS A; B; C; E; F).[54] This is followed by the account of the *adventus Saxonum* described above, and the ensuing wars between the Saxons and Britons, though there is no reference to Rome in any of the manuscripts when they record the beginning of

Augustine's mission in 596.[55] The consecration of the first in the line of English rather than Roman bishops *c.*690 is a point of note: '*Ær wærun romanisce biscepas, siþþan wærun englisce*' ('before this time the bishops were Roman, and afterwards they were English').[56] Although way-markers like this are seemingly important milestones on the road to a kind of religious self-sufficiency, there are frequent references to ecclesiastical and secular figures who either visit (or end their lives in) Rome, or who are recipients of Roman authority. Indeed, the Chronicle assumes so much travel back and forth to Rome that the authors of the Chronicle found it sufficiently important to note that in *c.*889, as a consequence of Viking violence, '*On þissum geare næs nan fereld to Rome, buton tuegen hleaperas Elfred cyning sende mid gewritum*' ('in this year there was none who travelled to Rome, except for two runners King Alfred sent with letters').[57] As one might expect, given their shared interests in the promotion of Wessex, Rome occupies a similar position in Asser's *Vita Alfredi*, in which Asser has King Aethelwulf send his son, a young Alfred, to be anointed by Pope Leo in Rome (c. 8), confirming both his kingliness and his holiness.[58] The Roman past seems to have exerted similar influence over Alfred's immediate descendants; for example, a silver penny minted at Chester in the reign of Edward the Elder imitated a coin minted in the reign of Constantine the Great, evoking the imagery of a fortified gate.[59] Constantinian influence is apparent elsewhere too (as well as in the literary record), for example in the restoration of Gloucester, a former Roman town where Alfred's daughter Aethelflaed built a new minster (*c.*909), seemingly to house the remains of herself and her husband Aethelraed, probably at around the time that the Roman fortifications were refurbished and a street plan established.[60] At this minster were also housed the relics of St Oswald of Northumbria, captured from Danish territory during a daring raid ordered by Aethelflaed and Edward.[61] As I have argued elsewhere, in positioning the relics of Oswald at Gloucester, which lay on the borders of Mercia, Wessex, and Wales, Aethelflaed seems to have been taking advantage of Oswald's role in the unification of Bernicia and Deira under the banner of Christianity, as he is presented in Bede's *Historia*. Bede, in turn, had modelled his representation of Oswald on Constantine the Great, who from a contemporary perspective (in works such as *Elene*) was believed to have

unified the Roman Empire under Christ.[62] These various kinds of evidence, from a range of materials, show the ways in which aspects of ancient and contemporary Roman identity were appropriated and repurposed in early-medieval England. This took place both as a product of, and satellite to, the rejuvenation of Classical culture and influence that has been referred to by some as the Alfredian renaissance, during which these aspects of empire were assumed into the socio-cultural and socio-historic fabric of aspiring West Saxon imperial identity.

I have argued that representations of former Roman towns also underwent a pronounced shift in Old English literature at around this time. The poem *Andreas* offers an account of the (apocryphal) journey of St Andrew to Mermedonia, a ruinous Roman-style walled stone-built city with towers and gates, whose inhabitants eat human flesh and worship devils, and where St Matthew is held captive. Mermedonia is initially described in terms very similar to those found in *The Ruin* and *The Wanderer*, and is a forbidding realm of murder, cannibalism, and violence.[63] After freeing Matthew and numerous other captives, Andrew allows himself to be captured, and is brutally tortured for several days, whereupon he summons a torrent of baptismal water from a pillar in his jail cell, which rises up within the walls of Mermedonia, killing some of its citizens, and threatening to drown all of the rest. The Mermedonians pray to Andrew for respite, whereupon he allows the waters to recede, resurrects all but the worst Mermedonians to have died (fourteen are sucked down to hell through a burial mound), and has a church built on top of the place where he was held prisoner. In this way, Mermedonia is released from the mythologies of ruin and desolation which had once burdened it, and becomes a place of celebration and Christian community. Likewise, in the poem *Judith*, tentatively dated by Mark Griffith to the late-ninth or tenth century, the walled Israelite city of Bethulia, which has fallen under the assault of the Assyrian general Holofernes, becomes the bastion from which the Israelites sally forth to destroy their attackers after the eponymous Judith has beheaded their leader.[64] Numerous commentators have noted the political potential of this poem as an incitement to physical and spiritual violence against the various groups of Viking invaders who were attacking fortified *burghal* settlements at this time.[65] Some have even gone so far as to suggest that, for a tenth-century audience reading the poem, the figure of Judith may have evoked the

image of Alfred's daughter Aethelflaed, whose role in the capture and fortification of *burhs* in Mercia, in collaboration with her brother Edward, proved pivotal in the formation of what was being promoted as the 'Anglo-Saxon' kingdom that Edward's son Athelstan would come to rule.[66] These works, then, offer a view of the ways in which walled Roman towns were being recast at this time as places of community and military power for an emerging 'Anglo-Saxon' state, rather than as places which memorialized the violence done to their former British inhabitants.

Other works that were still in popular circulation in the tenth century, as attested by their survival in the Vercelli and Exeter Books, included *Elene* and *Juliana*, both authored by one of the few named Old English poets, Cynewulf, who was probably writing in the eighth (or ninth) century. Cynewulf's two hagiographical works are both set in late-third-century and early-fourth-century Roman contexts, with the opening of *Juliana* assuming the audience's knowledge of the tetrarchy and its persecution of Christians. However, amidst its description of the killing of Christians and the destruction of churches, it makes no mention of the fact that Maximian, under whose ultimate authority Juliana is murdered, is a Roman emperor. In fact, Cynewulf does not mention Rome at all in the poem's 731 lines, attributing Juliana's torture and murder entirely to the evil of Maximian and, more specifically, the Nicomedian governor Eleusius, who fails to take power over either her virginity or her faith.[67] *Elene*, which follows the accession of Constantine, his victory over Maximian, and his mother Helena's discovery of the cross, can be seen as a chronological sequel to *Juliana*.[68] However, the representation of Rome and Romans in this poem could not be more different. There are more references to Rome in *Elene*, either singularly or as part of compounds, than in any other single work of Old English poetry. The majority are used explicitly to define Constantine as the king of the Romans, and as ruler over the '*Romwaran*' ('citizens of Rome'; 9, 40, 46, 59, 62, 129, 981), though mention is also made of Eusebius, '*Rome bisceop*' ('bishop of Rome', 1051), who is brought to Jerusalem to help Helena in her mission. The difference between the two poems makes explicit the ways in which Cynewulf, and presumably the audience whose familiarity with the tetrarchy is assumed in *Juliana*, thought about what Rome was, and wasn't. In at least one sense, Rome was everything that their vision of Constantine represented, and sought to emulate: military might endorsed

by God. Rome is at the symbolic heart of *Elene*, and everything that Helena does is to bring the Holy Empire closer to God.

The golden hall of Heorot stands at the heart of *Beowulf*—the name of the building itself is a play on both 'hart' and 'heart', and may also invoke the centrality of the *heorþ* ('hearth'), as Nicole Discenza has recently observed.[69] At the heart of Heorot is one of the only figures in Old English literature who is both referred to as a *wealh* (see discussion above, 31 n.2) and given a speaking role, namely Hrothgar's queen Wealhtheow, whose name may indicate that she is not a native Dane. There is no suggestion whatsoever that Wealhtheow is a Briton, but her name reminds readers of those portions of early English society who were clearly regarded as ethnically 'other', and specifically as Britons who had been Romanized and conquered. Britons appear infrequently in Old English literature, and when they do, it is not in positive terms, as *The Battle of Brunanburh* has already demonstrated. On a more 'domestic' level, a well-known example of this is Riddle 12 of the Exeter Book (commonly solved as 'leather'—no solutions being given in the manuscript):

Fotum ic fere, foldan slite,
grene wongas, þenden ic gæst bere.
Gif me feorh losað, fæste binde
swearte wealas, hwilum sellan men.
Hwilum ic deorum drincan selle
beorne of bosme, hwilum mec bryd triedeð
felawlonc fotum, hwilum feorran broht
wonfeax wale wegeð ond þyð,
dol druncmennen deorcum nihtum,
wæteð in wætre, wyrmeð hwilum
fægre to fyre; me on fæðme sticaþ
hygegalan hond, hwyrfeð geneahhe,
swifeð me geond sweartne.

I fare by foot, trample the earth
The green fields, whilst I bear my spirit.
If I lose my life, I bind fast
the dark Welsh, and sometimes better men.
Sometimes I give drink to dear

men from my bosom, sometimes a bride treads on me
very proud, with her feet, and sometimes brought from afar
a dark-haired slave-girl cradles and presses me,
a stupid drunken slave-girl, in the dark nights,
moistens me with water, warms me sometimes
slowly by the fire; and on my bosom
places a lust-minded hand, and twists me about a great deal,
sweeps me through her darkness.

This text presumes a set of shared assumptions about Britons that are sharply juxtaposed with examples of virtue found elsewhere in Old English literature. The voice of the oxen transformed into leather post-mortem, unbound from its spirit, most often binds the '*swearte wealas*' ('dark Welsh'). Like *wonfeax* (below), this term is clearly intended to be pejorative, as Nina Rulon Miller notes, following David Pelteret, who points out its association elsewhere with hell, devils, ravens, death, sin, and so on.[70] The ox's comment that at other times it binds '*sellan men*' ('better men') than the dark Welsh leaves the reader in no doubt that these *swearte wealas* are of the lowest status. From the binding of men, the riddle moves on to the use of leather by women. The first one can assume to be of high status, and *not* a Briton; she treads this leather '*felawlonc*' ('very proud'). The second, a '*wonfeax wale*' ('dark haired slave'), has been brought from afar, and—if the riddle is read in one way—can be seen drunkenly masturbating beside a fire. The ethnic difference between the woman who treads on leather shoes, and the woman who uses a leather object in a sexual context is pointed here; the latter is from far away, takes pleasure in being drunk, and is characterized by the motions of her '*hygegalan hond*' ('lust-minded hand').

Aside from this, references to Britons in Old English poetry, the sort of literature that most often reveals early English ideological orthodoxies, seldom tell us much about them—the word *wealas*, for one, appears only in this particular form in Riddle 12 and *Brunanburh*.[71] Elsewhere, there are indications of similar hostilities towards Britons in Felix's *Vita Guthlaci*, a work produced at around the time when, as Alfred Siewers has argued, Old English-speaking peoples were defining physical and conceptual spaces for themselves in the landscape.[72] The *Vita Guthlaci* recounts the life of St Guthlac, once a warrior fighting in the retinue of the

Mercians, who first became a monk at Repton before retreating further from the earthly life to establish a fenland hermitage in Crowland.[73] The demons inhabiting this landscape, which is of the same kind found most forbidding in *Beowulf*, initially attempt to frustrate Guthlac's liberation, or 'making new' of this place.[74] One night, rousing Guthlac from a light sleep, they adopt the guise of a British army, whose speech he is able to understand thanks to time spent among the British as an exile.[75] He manages to banish them through his own speech, singing the first verse of psalm sixty-seven, and the demons vanish like smoke. Voices are important throughout the *Vita Guthlaci*—the Latin tongue is praised (c. 10), Guthlac is said not to have squandered his speech, lied, or imitated birds in his youth (c. 12), the wisdom of his speech as a monk is noted (c. 21), angelic voices celebrate the (temporary) banishment of demons (c. 33), Guthlac mocks Satan for imitating the sounds of beasts (c. 36), two swallows herald the arrival of St Wilfrid with their song (c. 39), and angelic song marks Guthlac's passing (c. 50). The British speech of the demons in chapter 34, though it is not the same as the cacophony of their voices when they first appear in chapter 31, nevertheless encourages comparison between the two:[76]

> *Erant enim aspectu truces, forma terribiles, capitibus magnis, collis longis, macilenta facie, lurido vultu, squalida barba, auribus hispidis, fronte torva, trucibus oculis, ore foetido, dentibus equineis, gutture flammivomo, faucibus tortis, labro lato, vocibus horrisonis, comis obustis, buccula crassa, pectore arduo, femoribus scabris, genibus nodatis, cruribus uncis, talo tumido, plantis aversis, ore patulo, clamoribus raucisonis. Ita enim inmensis vagitibus horrescere audiebantur, ut totam paene a caelo in terram intercapedinem clangisonis boatibus inplerent.*
>
> For they were ferocious in appearance, terrible in shape with great heads, long necks, thin faces, yellow complexions, filthy beards, shaggy ears, wild foreheads, fierce eyes, foul mouths, horses' teeth, throats vomiting flames, twisted jaws, thick lips, strident voices, singed hair, fat cheeks, pigeons' breasts, scabby thighs, knotty knees, crooked legs, swollen ankles, splay feet, spreading mouths, raucous cries. For they grew so terrible to hear with their mighty shriekings that they filled almost the whole intervening space between earth and heaven with their discordant bellowings.[77]

The 'sibilant speech' of the demons when they are seen later, in British guise, thus emerges from the same 'spreading mouths' as 'flames', 'raucous cries', and 'mighty shriekings' when they are first encountered. These 'discordant bellowings' are such that they fill the space between earth and heaven which demons are compelled to wander without rest.

Felix's description of the demons' voices renders the Celtic language of the British unequivocally diabolical—it is a horror to be silenced. As in the *Vita Guthlaci*, this is by and large what seems to have happened in early-medieval England, despite the case made by some linguists for the influence of Brittonic on Old English. What this chapter has attempted to demonstrate is the ways in which both British and Roman identities were manipulated, created, and exploited in the formation of an imperialistic 'Anglo-Saxon' identity. British identity in early English texts emerges *sous rature*; one of the principal narrative functions of the British in Bede, the Chronicle, and parallel textual traditions, is to have been removed and replaced. They occupy Britain's cities during the *adventus* so that these cities can be laid low and their inhabitants slaughtered or enslaved; following this they are symbolically de-centred, marginalized, and resituated in places of wilderness and waste. Despite patently having been useful allies, as these same textual sources confirm, and despite the presence of Welshmen such as Alfred the Great's own biographer, Asser, in high-status contexts, the treatment of Britons in early English texts indicates a set of consistently negative attitudes towards peoples who were clearly regarded as an ethnic sub-class. Underpinned by this (needless to say abhorrent) set of attitudes was the adoption of various aspects of *Romanitas*, encouraged by the Gregorian mission and the Roman Church, and promoted by Bede and his successors in opposition to British Christianity. This included ecclesiastical building in stone, the alignment of the Roman with the Christian, and—later—the reoccupation and refortification of walled Roman sites for use as strongholds and settlements. This assumption of Roman identity *into* early English identity is most evident in writings from the reign of Alfred onwards, and is visible in various forms. Amongst them is the preface to the *Cura Pastoralis*, in which Alfred treats the transmission of holy wisdom from Latin into Old English as part of a divinely ordained order of things, and the other translations made at around this time which, as Nicholas Howe argued, indicate the centrality of Rome and its absorption into early-medieval England's sense of its place in the world. Britain had fallen, as Jerusalem had fallen, and as Rome had fallen—all earthly empires would fall. But for the 'Anglo-Saxons', constructing their identity within and from these ruins, and reinterpreting and reappropriating them as they saw fit, the

wreckage of Rome formed the hard core of the earthly and spiritual foundation that would be constructed in their rubble.

Michael D.J. Bintley, *Romans, Britons, and the Construction of 'Anglo-Saxon' Identity* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0003

[1] See further discussion of Gildas by Alex Woolf in the preceding chapter of this volume.

[2] As Alex Woolf has demonstrated, *wealh* does not mean 'foreigner', but rather refers to Britons 'who had at one time been within the Empire', and was never used of 'Gaels, Picts, Finns, Slavs, or other more exotic peoples'; see A. Woolf (2010) 232; also discussion in Pelteret (1995) 319–22.

[3] Jones (1996); Higham (1992); Dark (1994); Dark (2000); Faulkner (2001). See also discussion in Halsall (2007).

[4] There is a substantial body of literature on 'Anglo-Saxon ethnic' identity, especially in terms of how it is (or is not) expressed in the archaeological record. An excellent introduction to these issues is outlined in Halsall (2007) 38–41; for further commentary, see (e.g.) discussion in Hills (2011); Hills (2007); Hills (2003); Hines (1994); also essays in Hines (1997), and recent discussion of migration and cultural change in Pickles (2018).

[5] The first part of this chapter draws on arguments put forward in Bintley (2020). The presence of these Roman ruins in Old English poetry is widely discussed; see, for example, Klinck (1992) 61–2. See also in this volume Burton, 192–5.

[6] Bell (2005) 39–68.

[7] Bernard Muir writes that 'the combined codicological and literary evidence indicates that the anthology was designed and copied out *circa* 965–75', though 'the relative dating of the [Anglo-Saxon] poetic codices is notoriously difficult and controversial'; see Muir (2000) 1.

[8] References to *The Ruin* from Muir (2000) 357–8. All Old English translations are my own.

[9] RCHME (1962) 13–14.

[10] Muir (2000) 215–19.

[11] See further discussion of the work of giants in Howe (2002 and 2005).

[12] Bintley (2018).

[13] References to *The Battle of Brunanburh* from Dobbie (1942) 16–20.

[14] As Ken Dark writes, 'Post-Roman cataclysm remains the conventional picture of the end of Roman Britain for many professional archaeologists and historians'; Dark (2002) 12. In a forthcoming work Rhys Kaminski-Jones (pers. comm.) will discuss the tenacity of this mass migration and extirpation narrative despite serious questioning from the eighteenth century onwards.

[15] Winterbottom (1978) 98 (c. 26).

[16] References to the *Historia Ecclesiastica* from Colgrave and Mynors (1969) 66–7 (i.22). Hereafter *HE*.

[17] Miller (1890) 54 (i.12).

[18] Keynes suggests that this may have taken place *c*.880, 'in connection with Alfred's assumption of power over the English Mercians, but it was apparently a while before it began to take hold, and it may thus have been specifically in connection with the events of 886', namely the reoccupation of the walled city of London, 'that Alfred came to be hailed as "king of the Anglo-Saxons"'; see Keynes (1998) 25–6, 36.

[19] Text from MS A, from Bately (1986) 18; this is also recorded in MS B, Taylor (1983) 13; MS C, O'Brien O'Keeffe (2001) 28; MS E, Irvine (2004) 16–17; this detail is inserted in Latin (but not OE) in MS F, Baker (2000) 20–1.

[20] Text from Chronicle MS A (p. 19); also MSS B (p. 14); C (p. 30); E (p. 18); F (p. 22).

[21] Text from Chronicle MS A (p. 20); also MSS B (p. 15); C (p. 31); E (p. 21); F (p. 23).

[22] The taking of these cities appears in Chronicle MSS A (p. 24); B (p. 18); C (p. 34); F (p. 28); the so-called Battle of Chester in MSS A (p. 26); E (pp. 22–3); F (p. 29).

[23] As Patrick Sims-Williams has noted, the Chronicle almost exclusively represents relations between Britons and 'Anglo-Saxons' as violent; see Sims-Williams (1983). On Bede's approaches to Britons, see Trent Foley and Higham (2009), and for important discussion of this issue, and the 'origins of English racism', see Banham (1994).

[24] Padel (2007) 217, 230.

[25] Coates, Breeze, and Horovitz (2000) 7.

[26] Hope-Taylor (2009) 282–309; of particular relevance are discussions of burial at Yeavering in Lucy (2005), and the built environment in Ware (2005).

[27] Hamerow (2006) 1–30 (p. 28); see also discussion in Hamerow (2002) 14–17, 46–51; Hamerow (1995) 16; Jones (1996) 106.

[28] See grave goods in Bruce-Mitford (1983).

[29] This code, as Martin Grimmer argues, reflects 'a society that was segmented, or at least able to be segmented, in terms of ethnicity', and represents 'conditions in Ine's time or in the time of his immediate successors', in which the two 'co-existed under the same authority', in Grimmer (2007) 109, 112; Alex Woolf points out that although a Welsh noble's *wergild* 'is only half that of the English nobleman's it is, nevertheless, three times as high as that of the English *ceorl*', and that this shows that Britons were not 'uniformly' regarded as lower status than the English. Nevertheless, he notes the 'strong economic incentives to preserve this segregation when viewed from an English perspective'; A. Woolf (2007) 127–8.

[30] Coates et al. (2007) 186; Schrijver (2007) 171. In opposition to Coates' position, Hildegard Tristram, in the same volume, concludes that the British elected to adopt 'the emerging Old English dialects first in the British Lowland Zone and later in the Highland Zone', over a period of three centuries, and suggests that 'in doing so, they are likely to have Brittonised spoken Old English on the level of phonology and above all morphosyntax'; see Tristram (2007) 214.

[31] On the likely location of this meeting, the orchestration of which may suggest the extent of the Kentish king Aethelberht's influence in southern Britain at this time, see Eagles (2003).

[32] *HE* ii.2 (pp. 134–43).

[33] *HE* ii.2 (pp. 134–43). Correspondingly, the primacy of the Roman over the Irish Church, who *do* play an important role in the conversion of Northumbria and its kings, is later demonstrated at the Synod of Whitby.

[34] *HE* i.25 (pp. 74–7).

[35] Boulton and Hawkes (2015) 109–11.

[36] Boulton and Hawkes (2015) 109–10.

[37] Boulton and Hawkes (2015) 106; also Brooks (1977).

[38] Gittos (2013) 94–7.

[39] Fletcher (1969); Fletcher and Meates (1977).

[40] McAleer (1999) 11–16; see also discussion of the early Church at Rochester in Brett (1996); and Brooks (2006).

[41] Schofield, Blackmore, and Stocker (2008); Schofield (1996) 33; Rodwell (1993) 96. Both London and Rochester had bishops established in 604 according to Bede (*HE* ii.3) and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MSS A (p. 26); E (p. 22); F (p. 29).

[42] The building of a wooden church under Edwin, followed by a rebuild in stone completed by Oswald, is described in *HE* ii.14 (p. 186), though to take this at face value would be to overlook the point Bede is making about Edwin's failure to secure Northumbrian Christianity (evidenced by apostasy after his death) and Oswald's success in temporarily uniting Bernicia and Deira. John Blair notes that 'at York, the legionary headquarters building stood until the ninth century, a grand setting for whatever church King Edwin built within or beside it', in Blair (1998) 44; see detailed discussion in Rollason (1999) 122–4; and Tweddle (1999) 157, 180–1.

[43] Speed (2014) 133.

[44] Howe (2004).

[45] Text from North, Allard, and Gillies (2011) 434.

[46] The literature discussing the Franks Casket is substantial; for an accessible introduction, see Webster (2010), or Webster (2012) 91–7. There is nowhere near enough room here to discuss the enormous influence of 'Roman' art on the artistic traditions of early-medieval England, nor Celtic connections and interactions—see introductory discussion in Webster (2012), 42–115.

[47] Godden and Irvine (2012) 112, 114.

[48] Godden (2016) xi–xii.

[49] Godden (2016) *passim*. As Godden writes, rather than using the *anno domini* system of dating, the translator 'follows Orosius in using instead the Roman system of dating by years before and after the foundation of Rome in 753 BC and evidently expects his readers to be familiar with it' (p. 435). Rome remains central in this respect, despite the excision of 'passages extolling the centrality of Rome to God's historical plan', as noted in Harris (2001) 499.

[50] It details Rome's construction by Romulus and Remus; the overthrow of Tarquin (ii.2); the reign of Brutus (ii.3); the war with the Sabines and the establishment of the Senate (ii.4); plague, famine, slave revolt, and war with the Volsci (ii.6); the laying waste of Rome by the Gauls (ii.8); more plague (iii.3); war with the Latins (iii.6); the humiliation of the Romans by the Samnites (iii.8); war with the Etruscans, Umbrians, Samnites, and Gauls (iii.10); war with the Tarentines (iv.1); war with the Carthaginians (iv.4–13); including an extended description of the destruction of Carthage (iv.13); war with the Numidians (v.7); the rise of Augustus and the submission of Germania (v.13–15); and Augustus' rebuilding of Rome after a great fire '*þy geare þe Crist geboren wæs*' ('in the year that Christ was born', vi.1), a symbolic rebirth of the city. Initial Roman refusal to recognize Christ leads to the collapse of an amphitheatre, killing twenty thousand (vi.2); the wickedness of Caligula (vi.3); the burning of the city by Nero (vi.5); and persecutions under Diocletian and Maximian (vi.30); and finally Alaric's conversion to Christianity and relatively peaceful conquest of Rome (vi.37–8).

[51] Godden (2016) 50, 36.

[52] In contrast with the emphasis on Rome itself, as argued in Harris (2001) 505.

[53] Chronicle MSS A (pp. 2, 4); B (pp. 1, 2); C (pp. 14, 16); D, Cubbin (1996) 3; E (pp. 3, 5); F (p. 1).

[54] Chronicle MSS A (p. 15); B (p. 11); C (p. 27); E (p. 14); F (pp. 5–6).

[55] Chronicle MSS A (p. 25); B (p. 18); C (p. 35); E (p. 22); F (p. 28).

[56] Deusdedit had in fact been 'the first native archbishop', as Swanton notes, 'but the continuous series of English primates begins with Berhtwald', see Swanton (2000) 40. Chronicle MSS A (p. 32); B (p. 23); C (p. 42); E (p. 34); F (p. 39).

[57] Chronicle MSS A (p. 54); B (p. 40); C (p. 65); D (p. 29); E (p. 53).

[58] Stevenson (1959) 7 (c. 8).

[59] Shapland (2019) 119–20.

[60] Biddle (1976) 134–5; Baker and Holt (2004) 20–1; Heighway (2001) 103; Heighway (1984a) 40, 51; Haslam (2006) 125.

[61] Heighway et al. (1978) 118–21; Heighway (1984b) 366; Heighway (2001) 108.

[62] Bintley (2015).

[63] See discussion in Bintley (2020), building on earlier arguments put forward in Bintley (2009).

[64] Griffith (1997) 47; Timmer earlier suggested a date in the early- to mid-tenth century; see Timmer (1978) 10.

[65] E.g. Astell (1989); Lochrie (1994).

[66] Timmer (1978) 6–7 noted that this association was first proposed in 1892, though argued against it.

[67] Bessinger (1978) 994.

[68] Jane Chance, noting this temporal proximity, suggests that both women may be seen as types of a specifically English Ecclesia; Chance (1986) 37.

[69] See Discenza (2017) 7–8, 181–8.

[70] See discussion in Rulon-Miller (2000) 104; following Pelteret (1995) 52.

[71] The eponymous speaker of *Widsith* tells us that he has been in the *Wala rices* ('kingdom of the Britons'), amongst other peoples of the British Isles, including Scots and Picts. Reference to *Widsith* from Muir (2000) 241–6 (line 78). Other identifications elsewhere are possible, though they do not use this term—Rulon-Miller notes three possible further appearances of 'Welsh *personae*' in the Exeter Book Riddles, for instance (in EBRs 12, 52, and 72); see Rulon-Miller (2000) 116–17. EBR 72 refers to the '*marcpaþas Walas*' ('the boundary paths of the Welsh'), and to a '*sweart hyrde*' ('dark herdsman'); EBR 49 refers to a '*þegn*' ('thegn', line 4) who 'is *sweart ond saloneb*' ('dark and dark-faced', line 5); EBR 52 may refer to a female slave leading a team of oxen. Text from Muir (2000) 324, 326, 367–8. Muir omits MS *walas* as 'extraneous', however, considering it a potential scribal introduction or error (p. 667).

[72] Siewers (2003).

[73] These details are recounted in the first twenty-four chapters of the *Vita*; see Colgrave (1956) 72–87, whilst the prologue dates the text to the reign of Aelfwald of East Anglia (713–49), after Guthlac's death in 714 and translation in 715. Colgrave suggested a date 'somewhere

between 730 and 740', partially on the basis of the Life's relationship with the works of Bede (p. 19).

[74] See further discussion of this process of reorienting creation in Brooks (2015). Fenland landscapes were in fact often profitable pastureland, as critics of Old English poetry tend to forget.

[75] Colgrave (1956) 110–11 (c. 34).

[76] Banham (1994) 148.

[77] Colgrave (1956) 102–3. Text and translation from Colgrave. For the possible influence of this passage in Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, see Burton in this volume, 188 n.45.

4

Origins and Introductions

Troy and Rome in Medieval British and Irish Writing

Helen Fulton

In 1287, a Sicilian judge called Guido delle Colonne produced a Latin prose text of the story of Troy, the *Historia Destructionis Troiae*. Based on an earlier, French romance by Benoît de Saint-Maure written in about 1160, Guido's text recast the story into the genre of Latin history, creating an authoritative account of what was regarded as a factual, historical event —the fall of Troy to the armies of the Greeks.

Foreshadowing the eventual destruction of Troy, Guido contemplates the chain of events which followed, including the *translatio imperii*, the transfer of imperial power from one people to another, which began with Troy:

> *Vt ipsa Troya deleta insurexerit, causa per quam Romana vrbs, que caput est vrbium, per Troyanos exules facta extitit uel promota, per Heneam scilicet et Ascanium natum eius, dictum Iulium. Et nonnulle alie propterea prouincie perpetuum ex Troyanis receperunt incolatum. Qualis est Anglia, que a Bruto Troyano, vnde Britania dicta est, legitur habitata.*[1]
>
> Though Troy itself was completely destroyed, it rose again, and its destruction was the reason that the city of Rome, which is the chief of cities, came into existence, being built and extended by the Trojan exiles, by Aeneas, that is, and Ascanius his son, called Julius. Afterward certain other provinces received from among the Trojans an enduring settlement. Such is England, which we read was settled by the Trojan, Brutus, which is why it is called Britain.[2]

Guido's account shows that he was familiar with the foundation myth of Britain as recounted by Geoffrey of Monmouth in his *Historia Regum Britanniae* of about 1138. Unlike Geoffrey, however, Guido conflates the names of England and Britain, a confusion that becomes institutionalized in the late Middle Ages.

This assimilation between England and Britain, the appropriation of the latter by the former, was assisted by the historical fiction that Britain was founded by the descendants of the Trojans. Often employed as a preface to a larger work, on the model of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, accounts of the Trojan diaspora functioned to introduce the concept of a Trojan British kingdom, one which preceded both the Romans and the English. For Welsh writers, such a history was unproblematic, providing a convincing backstory of British origins and British sovereignty that was cruelly usurped. They understood Britain to be their own former kingdom, ruled over by a series of British kings dispossessed by the Anglo-Saxons and later, especially after the Edwardian conquest of 1282, by the English. Anglo-Norman and English writers, on the other hand (that is, medieval writers who identified themselves as belonging to the kingdom of England), imagined Britain to be an earlier version of England, a former Roman province now ruled as an island polity by Norman and English kings. The notion of a pre-existent kingdom of Britain, encompassing the whole island, could only be reconciled with their own historical narrative of Trojan and Roman origins by eliding the importance of the so-called British kingdom—by describing its self-destruction, as Geoffrey of Monmouth so helpfully did, or by presenting it as a fiction, as did many of the French and English Arthurian romances. This was a fundamental difference of opinion which coloured the emergence of national and ethnic identities from about the twelfth century; the reliance on Troy as the basis of a foundation myth, embraced by both Welsh and English writers, was a key element in the struggle to appropriate the kingdom of Britain.

The main topic of this chapter, then, is a comparison of English, Welsh, and Irish refabrications of the Trojan legend as national origin myths, often articulated in the form of a 'Trojan preface' introducing narratives of nationalist significance. Historians from Britain and Ireland shared a desire to place Troy first as the preface or prequel to their versions of national history, whether Norman French, English, Welsh, or Irish. In the

linear sequence of national histories produced in Wales, the story of Troy is positioned first in the chronology, giving it an undeniable status as the progenitor of the British people and a guarantor of their sovereignty. In the cyclical model of history favoured by Geoffrey of Monmouth, where kings and empires rise and fall with the turn of the wheel of Fortune, Troy prefigures the fall of the Roman empire and the fall of the British kingdom to the Saxons, acting as a warning for the Norman monarchy and its English successors. For early Irish historians, drawing on universal histories to formulate origin legends for their own island territory, Troy functioned as a chronological milestone against which other events could be dated, and a reminder of the mobility of peoples from Asia to Europe; this served to attach Ireland, in the far west, to its roots in the east, thereby creating a distinctive cultural identity for the Irish.

There is an ambivalence about Troy which further complicates its place in the origin myths of England, Wales, and Ireland (not to mention the other nations of Europe which also traced their origins to Troy).[3] In some versions, exemplified by Virgil's *Aeneid*, Troy is a great city led by noble warriors including the virtuous Aeneas who went on to found Rome. But in other versions, particularly those of the *soi-disant* eye-witnesses, Dictys of Crete and Dares Phrygius, Aeneas is a traitor whose treachery resulted in the fall of Troy and whose subsequent exile and wandering provides an allegory of the sinner's journey towards salvation. The salvation of Aeneas is his legendary foundation of the city of Rome; crossing the border between Asia and Europe, from Troy to Rome, Aeneas, whose treachery brought about the destruction of Troy, is redeemed by his heroic foundation of Rome, the heart of European culture and history.[4]

British history and the struggle for 'Britain'

It was the twelfth-century historian Geoffrey of Monmouth who popularized the concept of an ancient British kingdom ruled by a dynastic succession, whose noblest exemplar was King Arthur. The legend of Brutus, descendant of Aeneas of Troy and the eponymous founder of the kingdom of Britain, was first recorded in the *Historia Brittonum* ('History of the Britons') of *c*.800 and probably represents an early British legend surviving in north Wales and the 'old north' of Britain.[5] Henry of

Huntingdon, who completed the first draft of his seven-volume *Historia Anglorum* (‘History of the English People’) in *c*.1133, based his account of the English mainly on Bede, but he borrowed from the *Historia Brittonum* the preface concerning the arrival of Brutus the Trojan as the founder of Britain.[6] However, it is no accident that Henry, like most other historians of his age, uses *Angli* (‘English’) in his title rather than *Britoni* (‘British’). Henry in fact cuts out the British people altogether, moving swiftly on to the coming of Julius Caesar and the Roman invasion, linking the kingdom of England to its Classical Roman and Trojan past and emphasizing the emergence of Britain, as an island empire, from the Roman province of Britannia. It was left to Geoffrey to fill in the missing gap between the founding of the island and the coming of the Saxons, foregrounding the British kingdom as the major power in the island whose British kings drove out the invading Romans. Geoffrey’s motives in writing the *Historia* have been variously interpreted, and were no doubt mixed even at the time, but the main purpose of the *Historia*, as an essentially imperialist account of history, is to reclaim the ancient Britons from the obscurity in which Gildas had left them, to push the origins of the Anglo-Norman empire back beyond Rome, and to act as a corrective to the exclusively English histories of Henry of Huntingdon and (Geoffrey’s particular *bête noire*) William of Malmesbury.[7]

Different versions of British history made a distinction, then, between the island of Britain as a former Roman province, as imagined by Gildas and Bede, and a hypothetical British kingdom founded by Brutus and ruled by a series of British kings, as imagined by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The former concept was appropriated by Anglo-Saxon kings to denote the territorial limits of their jurisdiction, as in the case of the tenth-century king Aethelstan who claimed to occupy ‘the throne of the whole kingdom of Britain’.[8] It was also the basis for the twelfth-century histories of the English people written by Henry of Huntingdon and William of Malmesbury, who, drawing on the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, celebrated England and its monarchy as a single dominant polity. Geoffrey’s *Historia*, no doubt in reaction to the anglocentricity of his contemporaries, constructed an alternative vision of the kingdom of Britain and its series of powerful kings, especially Arthur.[9] Once this vision of British history had spread throughout Europe, the Norman monarchy had to appropriate it as its own rightful legacy. As R.R. Davies wrote, ‘the British past had to be

captured and possessed by the English if their claim to the domination of Britain, and with it the revival of Arthur's empire, was to be historically and mythologically legitimized.'[10]

Since the Norman kingdom of England defined itself as the rightful successor to the Roman province of Britannia, the legend of the Trojan origins of Britain had to be appropriated as an origin legend for the English themselves, a process of literary imagining that was not without its difficulties. The story of Troy was in itself a cautionary tale, warning against the dangers of protracted war and internal treachery; in most medieval versions of the story, for instance, Aeneas is the traitor who betrays his city to the Greeks. Geoffrey of Monmouth went out of his way to whitewash Aeneas's descendant Brutus and show him to be the worthy founder of a great people, but the destruction of Troy left an ugly trace of violence and treachery, compromising its legacy of heroic defeat and the nobility of its refugee war veterans. Used as a preface to historical and literary narratives, the Troy story inevitably constitutes an ambiguity: it both explains the emergence of new dynasties, and warns of their downfall.

The use of the Troy story as a literary preface also works to produce a shared identity among the people who regard themselves as descendants of the Trojans. There have been many claims for the existence of nations, nationalism, and national identities from as early as the twelfth century, but kingdoms and communities are not politically the same as nations in the modern sense.[11] Susan Reynolds has written about early-medieval kingdoms as 'imagined ethnic unities', claiming that 'medieval ideas about kingdoms and peoples were very like modern ideas about nations',[12] and we can certainly envisage a sense of identity rooted in language, community, and ethnicity which is 'very like' national identity but not exactly the same.[13] I am more inclined to agree with Alex Mueller, who says:

> There is no convincing evidence that a modern understanding of the nation or the idea of popular sovereignty existed in fourteenth-century England … The English 'nation' that is invoked by late medieval writers is essentially a patriotic fantasy of the elite, which seeks justification not in popular rule, but through dynastic inheritance that could be traced back to ancient Troy.[14]

Genealogy, dynasty, inheritance: these were the concepts that structured identity in the late Middle Ages, both of individuals and of regional and ethnic communities. These same concepts shaped the emergence of a national identity in England. By 1417, at the Council of Constance, the English argued that they were a nation, called 'England or Britain', and in 1481 Edward IV referred to England and Scotland as 'these two nations'.[15] By England, of course, Edward meant not only the modern polity of England but also the territory of Wales, whose own national ambitions, expressed from the early Middle Ages, were repeatedly suppressed by the English government, both physically, through military conquest, and ideologically.

Nonetheless, the Welsh retained a clear sense of being an ethnic community that was linguistically and culturally distinct from the kingdom of England. They associated themselves not with England but with the ancient pre-Saxon kingdom of Britain. The term 'Celts' had not yet been recuperated from Classical sources as a term for the Welsh and Irish; instead, the Welsh thought of themselves as British. The idea of Britain as an ancient kingdom whose territory was the whole island positioned the Welsh as the original rulers of *Ynys Prydein*, 'the island of Britain', and the wealth of court poetry composed in Wales from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries uses Britain as a powerful marker of ethnic solidarity, part of the symbolic universe of Wales. The Welsh knew that they were descended from the British people since Geoffrey of Monmouth, among others, had told them that.[16] They also knew that the British people, unlike the English, were direct descendants of the Trojans who had founded the island of Britain. For the Welsh, then, 'Prydein' (Mod. W. *Prydain*) or Britain is their lost *patria*, the homeland of their Trojan ancestors taken away from them by the Saxons.

This older concept of 'Prydein' was revived by later Welsh poets in support of Welsh independence from England after the Edwardian conquest of 1282. In a stirring praise poem to Owain Glyn Dŵr, the Welsh leader of a rebellion against the English king in 1400, Gruffudd Llwyd (fl. *c*.1380–1410) imagines Owain on the battle-field:

> *Hyd Ddydd Brawd, medd dy wawdydd,*
> *Hanwyd o feilch, hynod fydd,*
> *Dyfyn glwys, daufiniog lain,*

Dêl brwydr, dy hwyl i Brydain,
Wrth dorri brisg i'th wisg wen
A'th ruthr i'r maes â'th rethren,
A'th hyrddwayw rhudd, cythrudd cant,
A'th ddeg enw a'th ddigoniant.[17]

Until the day of judgement, says your poet,
you are descended from noble stock, which will be famous,
a joyful summons to appear in person, with a two-edged blade,
when battle comes, your attack in full view of Britain,
cutting a path in your white cloak,
and your sudden charge on the battlefield with your javelin,
and your red blade thrusting, stirrer of a host,
and your fine honoured title and your victory.

In this poem, 'Britain' means the old Britain, the whole island where the Welsh were once sovereign, a *patria* which Owain is returning to the Welsh through his rebellion against the English. Elsewhere in the poem, Gruffudd compares Owain to Uthr Pendragon taking his revenge on the Saxons for the death of his brother Ambrosius, another image of the old Britain that aligns Owain with both the British past and the political present. The poem articulates the hope that Owain is the one who will restore the Welsh to their homeland and bring Britain back into British rule. There is a case for seeing Owain Glyn Dŵr as an agent of Welsh nationalism, though his uprising caused a traumatic schism in Wales which reverberated through to the Wars of the Roses, so if he intended to create a national unity he certainly failed.[18] Dividing the island of Britain among the victors was part of his plan, and his Welshness justified his inheritance of sovereignty over the whole of Britain.

A praise poet of the fifteenth century, Hywel Dafi (fl. *c*.1450–80), composed an elegy to one of his patrons, Hywel Dew ap Gwilym Dew, saying:

Brawdfaeth penceirddiaeth cerddawr,
Brudiau'n fud holl Brydain fawr.[19]

Fosterbrother of the singer's bardic craft,

prophecies are silent in the whole of Great Britain.

The term ‘Great Britain’ recalls the old Roman distinction between *Britannia maior* (‘greater Britain’), and *Britannia minor* (‘lesser Britain’), meaning Brittany, but it is also a contemporary fifteenth-century term for the whole of federated Britain comprising England, Wales, and Scotland.[20] Of course, the poet may be using *mawr* (‘great’) as a simple adjective, not as part of a formal name, but in either case he is invoking the old *patria*, the territory that the Welsh imagine was once theirs. Linking Britain to prophecy, using the Welsh form *brud* (‘prophecy’ and also ‘history’) which comes from the name Brutus, Hywel Dafi calls the old kingdom of Britain into being. With the death of his patron, Hywel Dew, the prophecies fall silent, not knowing what will happen next, a dramatic image of the impact of this death.

From these references—and there are many others—we can see that, for Welsh writers of the late Middle Ages, the idea of Britain signified the ancient island province of which the British, the ancestors of the Welsh, were the rightful rulers. In this sense it conveyed the loss of territory that the Welsh had suffered and their rhetorical hopes of the return of a Welsh king to the English throne—a hope that was thought to have been fulfilled on the accession of Henry Tudor to the throne in 1485.

In English writing, the term Britain also conveyed an ancient past, but in this case it signified the triumph of a revived English dynasty over the kingdom of the British, and the triumph of civilization over a barbarian people.[21] For a number of Norman and English writers, Britain was understood as the earlier or alternative name for England, confirming the authority of linear history as a succession of dynasties. Just as the Saxons had superseded the British, so the English as a unified people had now replaced the Normans. Alan MacColl has pointed out that Henry of Huntingdon and Walter Map were already in the twelfth century referring to the island of Britain as England.[22] Henry’s *Historia Anglorum* (‘History of the English’, *c*.1129) begins with a geographical description of what he calls ‘*regn[um] Romanorum*’ (‘the kingdom of the Romans’), on the model of Bede’s opening description of the island:

> Hec autem *insula*rum nobilissima *cui quondam Albion nomen fuit,* postea uero *Britannia,* nunc autem Anglis, *inter septentrionem et occidentem* sita est.[23]

> This, the most celebrated of islands, formerly called Albion, later Britain, and now England, is situated in the north west.

Histories of the English people, like that of Henry of Huntingdon or the *Estoire des Engleis* by Geffrai Gaimar, whose history of the English people began with a Trojan preface, represented the Saxons as one of a series of dynastic invaders into Britain, starting with the Trojans, then the Romans, then the Saxons, and finally the Normans.[24] The author of the Anglo-Norman *Description of England* (*c*.1135) attached to the end of Gaimar's history of the English warned that if the Welsh got their way, England would become Britain once more:

> *Apertement le vont disant,*
> *Forment nus vont maneçant,*
> *Qu'a la parfin tute l'avrunt,*
> *Par Artur le recoverunt …* [25]
>
> Openly they [the Welsh] go around saying,
> threatening us strongly,
> that eventually they will have everything;
> through Arthur they will get [Britain] back.

By the fourteenth century, however, English writers had relegated the British to a distant and legendary past where they could pose no threat to contemporary English identity and hegemony. Throughout his large and diverse corpus of poetry, Geoffrey Chaucer scarcely mentions the British at all except as an ancient people consigned to history. In the 'Man of Law's Tale' from the *Canterbury Tales*, the narrator describes early Britain in the time of the Saxon settlements, when the pagan Saxons had driven the Christian British into Wales:

> *In al that lond no Cristen dorste route;*
> *Alle Cristen folk been fled fro that contree*
> *Thurgh payens, that conquereden al aboute*
> *The plages of the north, by land and see.*
> *To Walys fledde the Cristyanytee*
> *Of olde Britons dwellynge in this ile;*
> *Ther was hir refut for the meene while.*[26]

> In all that land no Christian dared assemble;
> all Christian folk had fled from that country
> due to pagans, who had conquered everywhere around
> the regions of the north, by land and sea.
> To Wales they fled, the Christian community
> of old Britons who lived in this island;
> there was their refuge for the time being.

The key word here is ‘old’—the British people are already ancient, part of the past even at the moment of Saxon settlement. But at the same time, the name Britain has been appropriated as a synonym for England, implying that there are no British people left in the whole of Britain, only English everywhere, including Wales, where ethnic identity competed with the hegemonic national identity. In the ‘Franklin’s Tale’, which is set in Brittany, the hero, Arveragus, decides to seek adventure, ‘*to goon and dwelle a yeer or tweyne / In Engelond, that cleped was eek Briteyne*’ (‘to go and live for a year or two in England, that was also called Britain’, V. 809–10). Taking his cue from earlier historians, Chaucer implies that England is the normative name, and Britain is a somewhat quaint and old-fashioned variant no longer in use.

Medieval Britain, then, was a site of contention between two versions of Britishness: the Welsh concept of a lost homeland which may yet be restored to them, and the English concept (largely shared by the Scots) of an ancient kingdom well past its use-by date, and legitimately replaced by a new and better dynasty, that of the Normans. Both versions of Britishness, the Welsh and the English, claimed legitimacy through a genealogical model of history which placed their origins in Troy.[27] In the later Middle Ages, this dynastic or genealogical account of British history was used to explain the emergence of the English not simply as an historic people but as a contemporary nation. Britain was re-imagined as England without the British. The British, sometimes but not always associated with the present-day Welsh, were framed as an ancient and extinct people belonging to a period of time far distant from the present. The possible threat posed by the Welsh to English hegemony, foreshadowed by Geoffrey of Monmouth and Gaimar’s chronicle, had been contained and dissipated by the Edwardian conquest of 1282. The land of Britain now belonged to the English, making Britain synonymous with England.

This process of claiming the whole of Britain for the English was, not surprisingly, resisted by the Welsh who, throughout the Middle Ages, insisted on the older distinction between British and English as two ethnically different and oppositional peoples, distinguished by language, culture, and power. But as a terrain of ideological contest, the idea of Britain culminated in the triumph of England and Englishness as modern synonyms for Britain and Britishness, deleting Welsh claims to be the true descendants of the British people and their kingdom.

Troy and Rome

The careful and deliberate construction of an English identity claiming legitimacy as part of an inevitable dynastic succession was heavily substantiated by the literary recovery of England's Trojan past. Of all the narratives in the chronicle and romance accounts of English history, the story of Troy was one of the most popular in the late Middle Ages, significantly more popular than legends of Arthur, who does not feature in his own English epic until the great prose work of Sir Thomas Malory, the *Morte Darthur*, written in the 1470s. Arthur was largely a vernacular hero and Malory drew on the long French prose romances of the Vulgate Cycle for most of his information, while the story of Troy was authorized by Latin histories including Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* and Guido delle Colonne's Latin account of the destruction of Troy. It therefore had a credibility as an origin legend for the English which the romantic accounts of Arthur lacked. It is striking that Chaucer writes about Rome and about Troy but rarely mentions Arthur, whose dubious historicity and Britishness consign him to an inglorious past.

The legacy of Rome as a source of English identity was also of interest to late-medieval writers, though these writers were less interested in the historical aspects of the Roman occupation of Britain than earlier historians such as Gildas and Bede. It was largely due to Geoffrey and his twelfth-century contemporaries that Rome came to be associated not so much with British as with English identity in this period, an identity that began to emerge as the Norman aristocracy came to recognize the centrality of England to its political power. In Geoffrey's account, the Romans were unlawful invaders of Britain whose rule was finally

undermined by a series of power-hungry tyrant kings such as Maximianus and Gratianus, to the point where the Romans decided to withdraw from Britain and leave the British people to defend themselves.[28] What they left behind were the great cities that they founded, whose ruins symbolized the decline of post-Roman Britain under the British, a decline that (according to the Normans) was exacerbated by the unruly Anglo-Saxons and only reversed by the Norman conquest.

In fact, Anglo-Norman approaches to Roman heritage often mirrored the Anglo-Saxon strategies described by Michael Bintley in the previous chapter. While the evidence of Roman ruins acted as witness to the death of an empire, urban rebuilding and the foundation of new towns testified to imperial renewal, the inheritance of *romanitas* and its civilization by the Norman monarchs. Gerald of Wales claimed of Caerleon in south Wales that its buildings 'once rivalled the magnificence of ancient Rome', simultaneously lamenting the decline of the town while asserting its Classical heritage.[29] William of Malmesbury noted approvingly (*c*.1125) the rebuilding programme undertaken by the Normans after their arrival in England, saying: '*Videas ubique in villis ecclesias, in vicis et urbibus monasteria, novo aedificandi genere consurgere*' ('You may see everywhere churches in villages, in towns and cities, monasteries rising in a new style of architecture').[30] In their building and rebuilding of churches, castles, and towns, the Normans claimed a decisive break with the immediate Anglo-Saxon past, while reclaiming the older prestige heritage of the Romans. By retracing the pathways of the Romans throughout England, Wales, and the lowlands of Scotland, the Normans created what R.R. Davies has called the first English empire, taking its inspiration from Rome.[31]

In Welsh and Irish writing, Rome is represented as a source of culture and learning but is less important than Troy as part of a narrative of origins. In Ireland, in terms of Irish engagement with Classical texts, the mythology of Greece seems to have been a more formative influence than that of Rome, mainly because of a belief in the Greek origins of some of the early Irish settlers.[32] Echoes of Homeric themes from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have been discerned in the early Irish prose sagas by some readers, along with other small traces of Greek mythology, such as the parallels between the legend of Phaedra and the Irish story of *Fingal*

Rónáin (‘Ronan’s Killing of a Kinsman’).[33] A Middle Irish version of the adventures of Ulysses, *Merugud Uilix maic Leirtis* (‘The Journey of Ulysses son of Laertes’), which dates from about 1300, is a short text based on a few key moments in Homer’s *Odyssey*, with noticeable stylistic features common to the Irish literary tradition, and there are also late-medieval Irish versions of the Alexander legends, and tales of Theseus, Hercules, and Achilles.[34] For Irish writers, the Greeks were a noble people whose epic heroes provided positive role models for Irish kings and warriors.

In their partiality for epic as the most suitable genre for a noble people of ancient lineage, the Irish also embraced the great events of Roman history as told in popular texts such as Virgil’s *Aeneid*, Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, and even Statius’s *Thebaid* (though the main topic of this text is Theban myth). All of these were adapted into Irish, the first two surviving from the fourteenth century and the third found in a fifteenth-century manuscript, though all three may well be earlier.[35] These Roman histories were absorbed into Ireland’s own epic discourse of legendary heroes: each adaptation is given a title from the lists of generic tale-types found in tenth-century classifications of Irish story material.[36] Thus Statius’s *Thebaid* becomes *Togail na Tébe* (‘The Destruction of Thebes’), incorporating it into an already popular native genre of *togla* (‘destructions’). The adaptation of Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *Imtheachta Æniasa* (‘The Wanderings of Aeneas’), is also given a generic title to align it with native tales of heroic journeys and exiles, while Lucan’s *Pharsalia* becomes *In Cath Catharda* (‘The Civil War’), bringing it into a sequence of other *catha* or famous battle stories belonging to native tradition.[37] Though the Irish did not trace their own origins from Rome, for Irish writers and their audiences accounts of Roman history were part of Ireland’s sense of identity as a people who shared the epic greatness of the Classical world.

Rome had a greater salience in Wales compared to Ireland, mainly because the Roman occupation of Britain had left its legacy in many parts of Wales, especially in the Roman settlements at Caerleon in the south and Caernarfon in the north-west.[38] The twelfth-century Welsh prose tale *Breuddwyt Maxen Wledig* (‘The Dream of Maxen Wledig’, literally ‘Maxen the Prince’) is set in a fictionalized Roman past, and attempts to

align the British history of the Welsh people with the period of Roman occupation. The fable begins with a Roman preface in which Maxen, loosely based on Magnus Maximus, the Roman emperor from AD 383 until his death in 388, seeks out and marries a British woman, Elen, the daughter of Eudaf the chief of Segontium (the Roman fortress near Caernarfon).[39] The main point of the tale is to establish that Brittany was founded by a group of British settlers from Wales (having been given the land by Maxen as a reward for military service), and to claim the Roman emperor Maxen as an ancestor for some of the British royal dynasties.[40] The three 'cities' of Caerleon, Carmarthen, and Caernarfon are said in the tale to have been built by Maxen at Elen's request, giving the Britons an explicit ownership of what might otherwise be regarded as fortifications built by a foreign power.[41] Thus the British people are represented as the equals of the Romans in their nobility and their military prowess, functioning as allies of the Romans rather than as a colonized people in an occupied territory, a relationship which then justifies the continuing sovereignty of the British people following the Roman withdrawal.[42]

For medieval English writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the legacies of both Rome and Troy were imaginatively reconceived as the twin foundations of a distinctively English history. Under the influence of Norman imperialism, English ethnicity and the idea of England became conflated with most of Britain apart from the northern areas of Scotland. Roman Britain was therefore invoked by literary writers as a kind of talismanic cipher for Roman England, an appeal to a national past which defined a contemporary English empire. Popular romances of the fourteenth century draw on fictional accounts of Classical history, such as the stanzaic romance *Le Bone Florence of Rome*, in which a war between Rome and Constantinople provides the backdrop to the romance of Florence and her lover Emere, or the *Siege of Jerusalem*, in which the emperor Vespasian and his son Titus besiege the holy city to punish the Jews. Even the anglicization of King Arthur is accomplished through his association with Rome, starting with his coronation in the Roman city of Caerleon, described by Geoffrey of Monmouth, and continuing into vernacular English Arthurian romances such as the *Alliterative Morte Arthure* (*c*.1400) which recounts Arthur's war against the Roman emperor Lucius.

The retrieval of Troy in late-medieval England was a more complicated act of literary imagining. As the legitimate ancestor of Rome and of Roman Britain, the idea of Troy had an antiquity which gave it prestige and authority. From Geoffrey's account, based on a brief reference to Brutus in the earlier *Historia Brittonum* attributed to Nennius, it was clear that Troy represented the foundation of Britain itself as an island polity within which England was merely one of three equally weighted parts. While Roman Britain could be imagined as the predecessor to the kingdom of England, it was not so easy to override Brutus's Britain in the same way, when it was so explicitly coterminous with the whole island. To complicate matters further, the Welsh claimed to be the true descendants of the British people from Trojan stock, in direct opposition to the English who were descended from the hated Anglo-Saxons.[43]

The semiotic of Troy, then, signified something rather different from the semiotic of Rome, something older, something belonging to a completely different stratum of history, and a cultural presence that was only tenuously related to the English and their history. Lacking the material legacy of Rome, with its ruined cities still visible throughout Britain, the legacy of Troy was more imaginary and therefore invoked a more problematic sense of historical Britishness that English writers struggled to appropriate.

By the fourteenth century, legends of Troy were available in England not only from Geoffrey of Monmouth's account but from vernacular and Latin retellings of the long besieging of Troy by the Greeks. The French *Roman de Troie* ('Romance of Troy') by Benoît de Saint-Maure, written *c*.1160, was based on the earlier, Latin pseudo-history by Dares Phrygius (representing the Trojan viewpoint).[44] Benoît's vernacular romance was turned into a Latin history by Guido delle Colonne in 1287. Renamed *Historia Destructionis Troiae* ('History of the Destruction of Troy'), this was the most popular version in the Middle Ages and formed the basis of three Middle English narratives: the *Gest Hystoriale of the Destruction of Troy* (1350–1400), the *Laud Troy Book* (*c*.1400), and John Lydgate's *Troy Book*, composed between 1412 and 1420.[45] The legends of Troy produced romantic spin-offs as well, the most famous being Geoffrey Chaucer's poem, *Troilus and Criseyde*, derived ultimately from Benoît de Saint-Maure's reading of Dares Phrygius, via Guido delle Colonne and Boccaccio's poem *Il Filostrato*. The first book to be printed in English,

published by William Caxton in Bruges or Ghent in 1473, was *The Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*, translated by Caxton from the French stories of Raoul Lefèvre. Aimed squarely at audiences in England, where Caxton would shortly set up shop, the book indicates the potential market there for books about Troy.

To English writers of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Troy symbolized the richness of Classical literary culture and its eastern origins. The theme of Troy functioned purposefully as an agent of *translatio imperii studiique*, the transfer of empire and learning from Greece to Rome, from east to west, which medieval European writers claimed as their heritage. These writers knew that Troy was located in Asia, across the water from Europe, and it therefore signified something both older and stranger than the civilizations of the Greeks or the Romans. The story of Troy was part of universal history, the linear teleology stretching from Adam or Abraham to the final day of judgement, in which the first and second destructions of Troy were among the major milestones by which the national histories of the nations emerging from the fall of the Roman empire could be aligned with universal history.[46] It was also part of providential history, which promised the transfer of power from one empire to another in a sequence which legitimated whichever people came to power.

As a former barbarian people, the English could not claim direct descent from Rome, so they looked back to Troy as their authentic point of origin. But the semiotics of Troy were complex and contradictory. Troy signified the Classical past and the transfer of power, but it also signified the fall of empires, the destruction of a civilization and its cities, the futility of large-scale violence, and the destabilizing consequences for the social order of treachery by individuals. The so-called eye-witness historians, Dares Phrygius and Dictys of Crete,—whose accounts were so influential for the dissemination of the legend in France, Britain, and Ireland—had challenged Virgil's adulatory presentation of Aeneas (already compromised by Ovid's parodic account of Aeneas's deification in *Metamorphoses* Book 15) by denouncing Aeneas and his faction as the traitors who betrayed Troy to the Greeks and thus brought about the fall of Troy.[47] And yet, if Troy had not fallen, Rome could not have been founded. This contradictory state of affairs, highlighted by Dares and Dictys, had significant consequences for national origin myths. At the

level of literary narrative, Aeneas is the flawed hero whose moral dilemma results in tragedy. At the level of national history, treachery results in the fall of a people. When nations claimed to be the rightful inheritors of Troy, Rome, or Britain, they put themselves under notice that they could fall as others had fallen.

National Origins and Trojan Ambiguities in Welsh and Irish Troy Narratives

Vernacular versions of the Trojan legend in Wales and Ireland had separate histories and served rather different functions. Welsh writers, as I have said, were invested in the Trojan origins of the kingdom of Britain as the preface to their own historical claims to sovereignty of 'Prydain'. In Ireland, Troy was part of a larger Classical inheritance which defined its learned class of monastic writers and asserted the Greek and Roman connections of the Irish people. In both languages, however, Troy served a distinctively chronological purpose, acting as a milestone which aligned the ethnic histories of Wales and Ireland with world events.

As in other parts of Europe, the Latin text of Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae Historia* ('The History of the Destruction of Troy'), was the main conduit for the Trojan story into Irish and Welsh.[48] The Irish version, *Togail Troí* ('The Destruction of Troy'), may have been translated as early as the tenth century and was known from the eleventh century. The Welsh *Ystorya Dared* ('Dares' History') was not translated until the early-fourteenth century, and seems to have been part of a move to make chronicles of British history available in Welsh.[49]

Both texts, like those of Benoît de Saint-Maure and Guido delle Colonne, are concerned with the origins of nations in the post-Roman world, and the emergence of new political territories from the old empire. Using a Boethian model of history, in which kings and dynasties rise and fall on the wheel of Fortune, accounts of the fall of Troy suggested a spiritual analogy for the fall of mankind and a political analogy for the fall of Rome. But, as in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia*, the workings of divine providence which govern the rise and fall of empires do not preclude the possibility of individual action leading to salvation. The

betrayal of Troy by Aeneas and Antenor and their supporters is the key decision of the whole saga, one made by a group of individuals desperate to escape the fall of their kingdom. And yet, as history shows, the fall is inevitable since it enables a new empire, that of Rome, to be born.

The manuscript history of the Welsh text of *Ystorya Dared* shows that it was intended to provide authority for the Trojan origins of the kingdom of Britain. Surviving in a number of manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the text invariably appears as the preface to Welsh chronicles that were emerging in the vernacular from the thirteenth century. In particular, *Ystorya Dared* often appears immediately before *Brut y Brenhinedd* ('History of the Kings'), the thirteenth-century translation of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae*, which is then followed by one of the Welsh continuations of the *Historia, Brut y Tywysogyon* ('History of the Princes').[50] In this way, manuscript compilers created a consecutive history of the Welsh that began with Troy and ended with their conquest by the English, proof that the Welsh were the true descendants of the Trojans and rulers of the first kingdom of Britain.

In its approach to history, *Togail Troí* takes its style from a more comprehensive account of Irish history, *Lebor Gabála* ('The Book of Invasions'), which survives in a number of recensions, the earliest dating to the eleventh century.[51] It is therefore likely to have emerged at about the same period as the Irish translation of Dares, which was used to provide further evidence of the timescale of settlements in Ireland. *Lebor Gabála* imagines the history of Ireland as a linear sequence of invasions by different peoples, each of whom displaced or assimilated the previous inhabitants. According to this account, the origins of the Gaels, the hegemonic founders of Ireland, are in Egypt and Scythia, an ancient land located on the borders of Europe and Asia. This origin myth for the Gaelic people of Ireland is aligned with the Troy story, which also recounts the travels of an ancestral people, the Trojans, from east to west, from Asia to Europe. As in the Welsh version of Dares, Troy acts as a preface to the history of the Irish people.

This history, occupying a long linear narrative comparable to the successive kingdoms in the island of Britain, is similar to the universal histories of early Christian writers such as Eusebius and Orosius, in that it encompasses a global view of the movements of peoples across the known world. The Irish *Togail Troí* is keenly aware that the long struggle for Troy,

through numerous battles lasting many years, is primarily a struggle between east and west, a heritage which the Irish believed that they shared. Though the text follows Dares' viewpoint in representing the Trojans, it also expands the Latin original to include heroic speeches from both sides, with Achilles in particular praised as one of the heroes of Greece. When Achilles offers to withdraw the Greek forces in exchange for Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, and Priam refuses, Achilles utters a lament for the needless slaughter of Greeks and Trojans:

> *'Mór in bvrba,' ol sé, 'donither sund .i. cathmílid chalma [ocus] curaid chróda na hAsia [ocus] na hEórpa do chomthinól co mbátar oc slaide [ocus] oc míairlech a chéile tría fochund óenmná.' Trom leis dano clanda na rígh [ocus] na tóisech [ocus] na n-octhigern do díbudh [ocus] do erchru triasi[n] fothasin, [ocus] athigh [ocus] doeraicme do móradh díanéis. Ba ferr síth [ocus] caratrad [ocus] cháinchomrac [do beith] ann, [ocus] cách do dola día thír feisin.*[52]
>
> 'Great the folly,' said he, 'that is done here, namely, to collect the valiant champions and hardy heroes of Asia and of Europe, so that they have been smiting and slaughtering each other because of one woman.' Grievous it seemed to him, then, that the children of the kings and the captains and the nobles should perish and fade through that cause, and peasants and mean races should become great after them. Better were peace there, and friendship and good will, and that each should go to his own land.

Achilles is thus represented as a peace-maker compared to the Trojans, and a warrior who understands the conflict as a global one between east and west in which there will be no winners.

Since the Irish and Welsh texts were both based on Dares, they both had to deal with the problem of Aeneas. According to the supposedly eye-witness accounts of Dares and Dictys, it was the Trojan Aeneas whose treachery betrayed his own people and brought about the final destruction of the city and polity of Troy. And yet this was also the man, praised by Virgil as *pius Aeneas* ('pious Aeneas'), whose descendants founded Rome and could therefore be regarded as the ancestor of all the peoples of Europe. Aeneas somehow had to be incorporated into later accounts as both hero and villain. The problem was partially solved in the Irish text by the literary imagining of a border between Asia and Europe, defined by Troy itself, standing on the Asian side and facing Greece on the European side. By crossing from one side of the border to the other, by leaving the burnt-out shell of Troy and travelling to Italy to found the great city and empire of Rome, Aeneas became a key player in a western narrative of European origins, and a fitting ancestor of the European nations.

In the Welsh text, the problem of Aeneas's treachery is muted by shifting some of the blame to his co-conspirator Antenor. Perhaps to a greater extent than the source text of Dares, the Welsh redactor blames Antenor rather than Aeneas for the treachery, and even hints that the Greeks must share some of the blame:

> *Ac Antenor a dywawt pa wed y kaei ef a hwynteu ryddit a gwaret. od ymffydyynt hwy ac ef ac nas dywetynt arnaw. A phawp ohonunt hwy a rodes kedernit idaw ar hynny. Ac yna pan welas antenor y gallei ef dywedut y darpar yn diogel idaw. ef a anuones at eneas y venegi idaw ef y gwneynt hwy vrat y gaer. ac yd ymogelynt wynteu ae holl wyr. ae da.*[53]
>
> And Antenor told how he and they could obtain freedom and deliverance if they would swear loyalty to him and not reveal it. And each of them gave a binding oath to him for that. And then when Antenor saw that he could tell Aeneas the plan safely, he sent word to him to tell him that they would betray the fortress and they would be protected and all their men and their goods.

By shifting the blame more decisively onto Antenor as the prime mover in the treachery, the Welsh redactor mitigates Aeneas's role in the plot and shows him nobly leading his band away from Troy and towards Italy (*parth ar eidal*) a detail not in Dares, which suggests the Welsh intention to signal Aeneas's redemption through his foundation of Rome.

The Trojan Preface in English Romance: *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* and Chaucer's *House of Fame*

Rather than attempting to explain away or whitewash problematic aspects of the Trojan legend, a number of Trojan texts in English succeed in conveying their ambivalence about Troy as part of the English symbolic universe. This ambivalence is already inherent in Guido's Latin account of the history of Troy: as Alex Mueller writes, 'Guido responds to Geoffrey's *Historia* by suggesting that the *translatio imperii* may do more harm than good.'[54] However, the story of Troy reinforces English identity not so much because of its antiquity, but because the flawed values of Troy illuminate by contrast the superior values of the English empire which succeeded it. Between the Trojan past and the English present stands the old kingdom of Britain, founded by the grandson of the traitor Aeneas. The taint of treachery is therefore aligned more with British identity than with

English identity, reinforcing the providential and rightful emergence of the English nation from a compromised past.

The Trojan preface in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* serves a double purpose, to provide an authoritative dating for the origins of the British people and also to foreshadow their fall even as he describes their beginnings. A similar Trojan preface appears at the beginning of the anonymous fourteenth-century poem *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, where it serves a similar double purpose in relation to the English. The *Gawain* preface is an abridged version of Geoffrey's narrative which had been transmitted into English via Layamon's *Brut*, written in the early-thirteenth century. Like Geoffrey's *Historia*, Layamon's version was regarded as history rather than as fiction, so the reference to Troy and the Trojan origins of Britain serves to locate Arthur and his court in a historical context, as if what follows were also part of a historical truth. At the very end of the poem, the poet refers to '*Brutus bokez*', 'Brutus's books', that is, any historical chronicle of the British people, bearing witness to the truth of the story of Gawain. History and romance overlap in the symbolic space of Troy.

The Trojan preface occupies only the first two stanzas of the poem, in which the poet gallops through the basic story of Brutus's foundation of Britain via Rome:

SIÞEN þe sege and þe assaut watz sesed at Troye,
Þe borȝ brittened and brent to brondeȝ and askez,
Þe tulk þat þe trammes of tresoun þer wroȝt
Watz tried for his tricherie, þe trewest on erthe:
Hit watz Ennias þe athel, and his highe kynde,
Þat siþen depreced prouinces, and patrounes bicome
Welneȝe of al þe wele in þe west iles.
Fro riche Romulus to Rome ricchis hym swyþe,
With gret bobbaunce þat burȝe he biges vpon fyrst,
And neuenes hit his aune nome, as hit now hat;
Tirius to Tuskan and teldes bigynnes,
Langaberde in Lumbardie lyftes vp homes,
And fer ouer þe French flod Felix Brutus
On mony bonkkes ful brode Bretayn he settez wyth wynne,
Where werre and wrake and wonder

Bi syþez hatz wont þerinne,
And oft boþe blysse and blunder
Ful skete hatz skyfted synne.
Ande quen þis Bretayn watz bigged bi þis burn rych,
Bolde bredden þerinne, baret þat lofden,
In mony turned tyme tene þat wroȝten.
Mo ferlyes on þis folde han fallen here oft
Þen in any oþer þat I wot, syn þat ilk tyme.
Bot of alle þat here bult, of Bretaygne kynges,
Ay watz Arthur þe hendest, as I haf herde telle.[55]

When the siege and the assault ceased at Troy, the city battered and burnt to ruins and ashes, the soldier who made there the instruments of treason was tried for his treachery, the most arrogant on earth; then Aeneas the princeling with his noble kin conquered regions and took possession of wellnigh all the wealth in the western isles. For rich Romulus took himself at once to Rome, with great prowess he establishes that city and gives it his own name, as it still has; Tirius went to Tuscany and set up dwellings, Langobard in Lombardy raised up houses, and far over the French sea Felix Brutus on many broad cliffs set Britain advantageously, where war and destruction and marvel have happened to take place there, and often both bliss and blunder have quickly changed places since.

And when this Britain was built by this noble man, a bold people were bred there who loved conflict in many shifting times that caused suffering. More wonders in this region have often happened here than in any other place I know, since that same time. But of all who lived here, of Britain's kings, Arthur was ever the most accomplished, as I have heard tell.

At this point, the storyteller starts off his tale at Arthur's court one Christmastide, when the Green Knight appears to issue his challenge and Sir Gawain responds to it. Why the Trojan preface? Gerald Morgan suggests that the poet's purpose in invoking Troy 'is to establish the

nobility of Arthur and Camelot by linking it to the nobility of Troy', and this is certainly part of the effect of the comparison.[56] Mickey Sweeney has argued that the Trojan preface foreshadows the temptation of Gawain by Bertilak's wife, a medieval Helen of Troy, though the preface is not about the story of Troy but about the founding of Britain.[57] Heide Estes suggests that the preface draws on Layamon's *Brut* for its details about the destruction of Troy through treachery and hints at the later betrayal of Camelot by Mordred.[58] Sylvia Federico also comments on the taint of betrayal that sticks to Gawain in the poem.[59] Alex Mueller develops the argument that *Gawain*, and other Middle English alliterative romances with a Trojan preface, 'satirize the very foundation of English nobility, suggesting that the effacement of their treacherous past has fostered a chivalric amnesia among its aristocratic inheritors'.[60]

However, the focus of the preface is very much on the historical associations of Troy with Britain, rather than its legendary destruction. This is what the preface wants to suggest: the compromised position of Troy within a historical narrative of England. The reference to Troy legitimizes Arthur's kingship of the British people as one of the historical descendants of Troy, but the language and location of the poem associate Arthur with England rather than with a kingdom of Britain whose political existence the English want to deny. The Trojan preface therefore works to affirm an English identity that has subsumed and cancelled out an earlier, British history. The preface also contains a warning. Arthur is represented as rising on Fortune's wheel almost from the ashes of Troy to become the most famous king of Britain. But in its very structure, featuring the repeating cycle of fall and rise, destruction and rebuilding, the preface foreshadows the downward path of the wheel. Arthur and his court are at the height of their fortune; the only way is down. By focusing on history rather than romance in the opening sequence, the poem implies that the story has a historical resonance: in other words, it is not just Camelot, that fabled place of Arthurian romance, that is in danger, it is the real world of English historical kings and their courts.

There is another aspect to the poem as well, namely its depiction of two different ethnic communities, the English and the Welsh, existing within an imagined kingdom of Britain. Most of the action of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* is set in north Wales and the neighbouring region of the

Wirral, where the castle and chapel of the Green Knight are located. This location itself, depicted as a wild and wintry landscape far from the civilization of Arthur's court, constructs an image of barbaric Britishness, representing an older and more primitive way of life compared to the civilization of Arthur's English court. Despite the outward trappings of contemporary consumerism described in Bertilak's court—the rich fabrics and furnishings, the great feasts, the noble guests—the atmosphere both inside and outside the court is savage and threatening. Bertilak's courtliness is a disguise that is removed to reveal something frightening, ancient, unknowable, and uncontrollable, like the British past that England tries to forget. In the end, as Gawain manages to evade all but one of the traps set for him, English civility overcomes British wildness—but only just.

In setting up this contrast between Britishness and Englishness, signalled by the Trojan preface, the poem authorizes a seamless transition from Britain to England. Arthur is introduced as a British king, but he presides over an English court and the real British people are the Welsh, still living out a fantasy of British power expressed through magic and trickery. If there is a taint of betrayal in the poem, it inheres less in Gawain than in Bertilak, the guileful representative of the ancient people of Britain inspired by the supernatural and living on the margins of civilization. As for Gawain, he replays the role of Aeneas as the flawed hero, wandering from place to place, from civilization to primitive chaos and back again—but which is which? When Gawain returns to Arthur's court, he finds his deeds have inspired a new ethic of courtliness, represented by the Order of the Garter. Like a combination of Virgil's *pius Aeneas* and the Christian sinner on a journey to salvation, his moral weakness has been expiated by penitence and forgiveness, and the English court is apparently restored to an imperial greatness.

Yet this ending does not completely airbrush away the flaws in Arthur's court, but rather leaves them exposed to uneasy view. Gawain prefigures Thomas Malory's Lancelot who, after healing the wounds of Sir Urry, 'wept as he had been a child that had been beaten', acknowledging his moral unworthiness of such an achievement.[61] The British history which the poem has tried to elide still lurks at the margins. For the English kingdom to be worthy of its imperium, it must take its British lineage seriously and bring all the peoples of Britain into the commonwealth of

the kingdom, a lesson that the Arthur of the poem, depicted as youthful and untested, has yet to learn.

Turning now to Chaucer's *House of Fame*, we can see that the Trojan preface, and other references to the Trojan legend, form similarly motivated comments on the questionable historical construction of English identity. The Trojan preface to the *House of Fame* occupies the greater part of Book 1 and indicates the poet's opening concern with the epic scale of Virgil's *Aeneid*, which he summarizes, and the theme of treachery, both the political treachery which brought Troy to destruction and the personal betrayal inflicted on Dido, the queen of Carthage, by her lover Aeneas. Reading the words and pictures round the walls of the temple of Venus, the poet creates a medieval Aeneas who exemplifies the conflict between military glory and the demands of love which lies at the heart of medieval romance:

> *First sawgh I the destruction*
> *Of Troy throgh the Greke Synon,*
> *With his fals forswerynge,*
> *And his chere and his lesynge*
> *Made the hors broght in to Troye,*
> *Thorgh which Troyens lost al her joye.*[62]
>
> First I saw the destruction
> of Troy by the Greek Sinon,
> with his false betrayal,
> and his face and his lying
> had the horse brought in to Troy,
> through which the Trojans lost all their happiness. (ll. 151–6)

This is history as ekphrasis, the Classically derived methodology that Gabrielle Spiegel has described as 'the record of visibly perceptible events.'[63] But having given us a summary of Aeneas's adventures and his love affair with Dido, and having followed Virgil in placing the blame on Sinon rather than directly on Aeneas, Chaucer now reminds us that another Roman poet, Ovid, also provided an account of the aftermath of Troy and the suicide of Dido:

But, what! when this was seyde and doo,
She rofe hir selfe to the herte
And dyed thorgh the wounde smerte.
And al the maner how she dyede
And al the wordes that she seyde—
Who so to knowe hit hath purpos,
Rede Virgile in Eneydos
Or the epistle of Ovyde,
What that she wrote er that she dyde.

But wait! When it was all said and done,
she stabbed herself to the heart
and died from the painful wound.
And the whole way in which she died
and all the words she spoke—
whoever wants to know this
should read Virgil's *Aeneid*
or the epistle of Ovid,
[to know] what she wrote before she died. (ll. 372–80)

Chaucer may be referring here to the seventh epistle of Ovid's *Heroides*, a collection of letters by famous women and some men to their lovers, including Dido to Aeneas.[64] Ovid also imagines letters linking other pairs of lovers from the Troy story, including letters exchanged between Paris and Helen and a letter to Achilles from Briseis, the prototype for Criseyde in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. But Ovid also wrote about the fall of Troy and the subsequent wanderings of Aeneas in his *Metamorphoses*, Books 12 to 14, modelling his account directly on Virgil's *Aeneid* though with a different narrative purpose. In Ovid's account, in contrast to Virgil, Aeneas is a man of action untroubled by conflicts between love and duty, while Dido is given little sympathy despite her suicide: '*deceptaque decipit omnes*' ('herself deceived, she deceived all')[65]. By naming Ovid as another source of the Trojan legend, Chaucer is implying that there is more than one version of what happened, and therefore more than one version of history, and indeed Virgil and Ovid present very different models of history in their respective works.[66]

Virgil's adaptation of Homer's epic, written in the last decades of the first century BC, arose out of the trauma of the loss of republican Rome and its replacement by the empire. As Heather James has written, 'Homer supplied Vergil with a heroic context to assuage Rome's recent political trauma [the loss of the republic] and a prestigious origin for Rome's emergent imperial character.'[67] In other words, when Augustus Caesar instituted his imperial government in Rome in 27 BC, marking the transition from republic to empire, it was the city of Troy, transmitted through Virgil's imperial ideology in the *Aeneid*, which provided a legitimate antecedent for Rome, the new Troy, and an authorizing source for Augustus's power.

Despite the many critics who have noted moral and political ambiguities in the *Aeneid*, the Virgilian reading of Troy can nevertheless be interpreted as an imperialist one, celebrating a new order which replaced the bloodshed of the past and installing Aeneas as the exemplar of Roman virtue.[68] Virgil's model of history can also seem notably linear and teleological, with all events leading to the foundation of Rome.[69] Ovid's version in the *Metamorphoses*, on the other hand, is more sceptical of this metanarrative, constantly undermining its authority through a lack of chronological sequence, an absence of cause and effect, and a certain amount of playfulness in response to the seriousness of the Virgilian epic. Ovid, writing a generation after Virgil, was prepared to question the imperial ideal of *Roma aeterna*, the belief that Rome would last forever. His very concept of 'metamorphosis' highlighted the inevitability of change and, as Karl Galinsky has pointed out, he associated Rome with the fallen cities of the past, not just Troy but also Sparta, Thebes, and Athens.[70] Just as their greatness finally decayed, so the glory of Rome would one day decline, a radical rewriting of the imperial narrative set out by Virgil.

In Chaucer's *House of Fame*, the conflicting accounts of the Troy story by Virgil and Ovid which are hinted at in the preface are made more explicit later in the poem, when more names are added to the list of historians whose accounts of Troy and the foundation of Britain speak against each other in a heteroglossic discourse. In Book 3, after the poet 'Geffrey' has been taken on a flight by the eagle, he describes his vision of the temple of Fame and the avenue of pillars on which famous writers

stood. Among them are those who told the story of Troy, from Homer through to Geoffrey of Monmouth:

> *And by him [i.e. Statius] stodd, withouten les,*
> *Ful wonder hye on a pilere*
> *Of yren, he, the gret Omere,*
> *And with him Dares and Tytus*
> *Before, and eke he, Lollius,*
> *And Guydo eke de Columpnis,*
> *And Englyssh Gaunfride eke, ywis—*
> *And eche of these, as I have joye,*
> *Was besye for to bere up Troye;*
> *So hevy therof was the fame*
> *That for to bere hyt was no game.*
>
> And near him stood, truly,
> amazingly high on a pillar
> of iron, he, the great Homer,
> and next to him Dares and Dictys
> in front, along with Lollius
> and also Guido delle Colonne
> and English Geoffrey as well, indeed—
> and each of these, to my delight,
> was busy holding up Troy;
> so heavy was the fame of it
> that to carry it was no joke. (ll. 1464–74)

Virgil and Ovid are added to this list as well, creating a cacophony of voices all telling us the history of Troy. What Chaucer is implying here, as he does elsewhere in his work, is the contingent nature of historical truth, drawing attention to history as an arena of debate in which truth and lies are, like rumours, often indistinguishable. The different versions of the Troy story, by Virgil and Ovid, Homer and Guido, and even the eye-witnesses Dares and Dictys, open up the potential for different readings of history and for writers to engage individually with history as a form of narrative. The fact that Chaucer has listed his historians with little regard for chronological order (Guido comes before Geoffrey of Monmouth) or

for reliability (the pagan Homer was dismissed by many medieval writers as a fabricator of legends) seems to echo Ovid's approach to narration and, like Ovid, works to undermine the authority of linear chronological history. Chaucer also gives no special status to the eye-witness accounts of Dares and Dictys, even though this was the most privileged form of history, and, finally, he inserts what is almost certainly a fake historian, Lollius, whose name is unknown outside Chaucer's own work.[71] Altogether, then, Chaucer is inviting us to make a choice between different versions of history and at the same time suggesting that the line between history and romance is finer than we would like to believe.[72]

In invoking this multiplicity of versions of the Troy story and the impossibility of treating one as more authoritative or authentic than another, Chaucer is enabling multiple origin legends and therefore multiple forms of English identity, hinting at the diversity of London life from within which he wrote. All the writers he lists except two belong to the Classical past, from Homer through to Dares and Dictys, representing the weight of previous empires which paved the way for the English empire to emerge. The exceptions are Guido delle Colonne and Geoffrey of Monmouth, specifically described as '*Englysshe Gaunfride*', 'English Geoffrey'. Since Geoffrey wrote in Latin, the epithet 'English' can only mean an ethnic or national identity, and a somewhat anachronistic one at that. In using this epithet, Chaucer is humorously claiming Geoffrey as a founder of the modern English nation, the writer whose account of the old British kingdom and its Trojan origins justified the emergence of the English empire. Britain has been appropriated as England—and yet Chaucer's critical view of historical truth undermines this political strategy, asking us to question a myth of national and ethnic origin which claims to be singular and absolute and yet is so clearly adaptable to multiple uses and interpretations.

Conclusion

The 'Trojan preface' and other adaptations of the Troy legend functioned as antecedents to narratives of national and ethnic identity in Britain and Ireland, linking their histories to an ancient Classical and imperial past. In Ireland, references to Troy in the *Lebor Gabála* alluded to Ireland's

heritage in both Europe and Asia, a dual origin confirmed by the Irish adaptation of Dares' account of the Trojan wars which emphasizes the global conflict between east and west. The key figure, the one who crosses the border between Asia and Europe, is Aeneas, whose indisputable treachery in bringing about the destruction of Troy is redeemed by his heroic foundation of Rome, the heart of European culture and history.

In Britain, Troy was the site of an ideological struggle between 'the Britain of the Britons and the Britain of the English'.[73] This struggle was won by English hegemony and foreshadowed the triumph of England as a synonym for Britain institutionalized by the Act of Union of 1536. It follows that there was no authentic British national identity in the late Middle Ages, but rather a sense of Britishness as a discursive construct deployed differently by Welsh and English writers. For the Welsh, their British heritage was a source of pride and a guarantee of their sovereignty as a people, especially after the Edwardian conquest of 1282 and the loss of the native Welsh aristocracy. For English writers, Britishness implied an ancient barbarism long since replaced by English civilization. Though ethnic identities held their ground in medieval Britain—English, Welsh, Scots, and others—the national identities were limited to English and Scots, mapping on to the kingdoms of England and Scotland. British identity was located elsewhere, in the past, where it had to be firmly consigned in order for an English national identity to establish itself.

In late-medieval Britain, where the epic heroism of Virgil's *Aeneid* had become compromised by the treachery of Aeneas, writers had to negotiate all the different versions of Troy that Geoffrey Chaucer enumerated in the *House of Fame*. Troy was the place that gave birth to the new Troys of Rome and London, but it was also the city brought down by a treacherous Aeneas, a fate that might easily befall other too-proud cities and their empires. The purpose of the Trojan preface is to establish the origins of nations, Roman, British, and English, but the ambivalence of Troy's legacy undermines any epic certainties, and offers only the contingencies of romance.

Helen Fulton, *Origins and Introductions: Troy and Rome in Medieval British and Irish Writing* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0004

[1] Griffin (1936) Book 2, ll. 24–31 (p. 11).

[2] Meek (1974) 9–10.

[3] Accounts of the Trojan origins of the Franks and other European peoples are discussed by Hay (1957).

[4] Sarah Spence (2010) argues that the version of the Troy story promulgated by Dares and Dictys, in which Aeneas is a traitor, came to influence the most compelling account of French national origins, the *Chanson de Roland*. The association of Aeneas and his son Ascanius with the founding of Rome was originally an invention of Greek writers, which conflicted with the Roman myth of the city's founding by Romulus and Remus until the two versions were reconciled and confirmed by Virgil and Livy. See Cary (1957) 34–6; Scullard (1969) 26.

[5] For the Trojan preface in *Historia Brittonum*, see Morris (1980) 59–61 (Latin) and 18–22 (English translation).

[6] Greenway (1996) 24–7.

[7] Knight (1983) argues that, while Geoffrey came from the March of Wales and was familiar with some Welsh material, the *Historia* affirms a Norman ideology: 'Geoffrey is a classic example of the marginal figures who are so often found realising the ideological requirements of a newly dominant class' (63). Gillingham (2000) asserts that 'Geoffrey was a Welshman whose object was to secure cultural respectability for his own nation' (20). I would be very surprised if Geoffrey considered himself to be a 'Welshman', especially as he claimed the Welsh were but 'the unworthy successors to the noble Britons', Reeve and Wright (2007), 280. The *Historia* points to Geoffrey identifying himself with Norman Marcher society, with an anti-Saxon bias and a desire to point out the dangers of political discord to imperial rule.

[8] Cited by Davies (2000) 37.

[9] Davies (1996) says that, in responding to the histories of William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, Geoffrey 'torpedoed their smug Anglocentricity by making Britain, not England, the subject of his work and by providing Britain with a glorious pre-English and non-English past' (10).

[10] Davies (2000) 41. Davies (1996) gives examples of Geoffrey's 'matter of Britain' being 'hijacked and put into the service of England' (16–17).

[11] See, e.g., Gillingham (2000); Turville-Petre (1996); Lavezzo (2004).

[12] Reynolds (1997) 8.

[13] Anthony Smith defined what he called 'ethnies' as 'named human populations with shared ancestry myths, histories and cultures, having an association with a specific territory, and a sense of solidarity'. See Smith (1986) 32. These ethnic communities can be regarded as the precursors of modern national identities, which begin to appear when the legal and political apparatus of state machinery replace the pre-modern landscape of dynastic empires and regional communities.

[14] Mueller (2013) 168–9.

[15] Griffiths (2003) 182–3.

[16] Gillingham (2000) 25.

[17] Ifans (2000) no. 11, ll. 71–8. All translations from Welsh are mine unless otherwise attributed.

[18] Len Scales and Oliver Zimmer cite the revolt of Owain Glyn Dŵr as an example of 'political activism in the nation's name'. See Scales and Zimmer (2005) 12.

[19] Lake (2015) vol. 1, no. 5, ll. 15–16.

[20] The term ‘Great Britain’ appears for the first time in official documentation of 1474 during the reign of Edward IV, which coincided with Hywel Dafi’s poetic career. See Hay (1955–6) 61. This use of ‘Great Britain’ in 1474 related specifically to England and Scotland, so the reference by Hywel Dafi could be interpreted as a means of explicitly including Wales in the federated polity.

[21] Gillingham (2000) describes the emergence in the early-twelfth century of a negative attitude towards the Welsh as barbarians, partly to justify Norman imperialism (27–31).

[22] MacColl (2006) 249, n. 4. See also Hay (1955–6) who cites Higden’s *Polychronicon* which refers to ‘Greater Britain, now called England’ (58).

[23] Greenway (1996) 12–13. The italics are editorial, indicating lacunae in Henry’s text which have been supplemented by quotations from Bede.

[24] Gaimar’s chronicle began with the Trojans though this part of the text is now lost. He says in his epilogue: ‘*Treske ci dit Gaima[r] de Troie*’ (‘Gaimar’s narrative goes all the way from Troy as far as here’). See Short (2009) 352 (v. 6528). Gillingham (2000) notes that ‘Gaimar was part of the process by which people in the twelfth century recovered their English past’ (120).

[25] Bell (1993) 43 (ll. 221–4), my translation.

[26] Benson (1988) 68 (II, 540–6), my translation.

[27] According to Ingledew (1994), Troy was a ‘genealogical sign’ which served the medieval aristocracy: ‘a symptom of genealogy as an appropriative instrument for princes and noble landowners, Troy was the conceptual product of a structure of power’ (674). Mueller (2013) argues that the Middle English alliterative romances, including *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, challenge the genealogy of Troy as the ancestor of the English and express scepticism towards the aristocratic practices associated with Troy.

[28] Reeve and Wright (2007) 98–115 (Book 5, chap. 81 to Book 6, chap. 91). Geoffrey, of course, celebrates the greatness of Arthur by depicting him defeating the Roman emperor, Lucius. Geoffrey shared with other twelfth-century writers, and with his patron, Robert of Gloucester, an antagonistic view of Rome due to the rise of papal power and corruption. Lucian’s praise of Chester, written in 1195, in which he compares Chester eulogistically with Rome, offers a more positive view of Rome as the seat of religious authority. See Doran (2007).

[29] Thorpe (1978) 114 (Book 1, chap. 5).

[30] Mynors (1998–9) vol. 1, Book 3.

[31] Davies (2000).

[32] This is not to say that Irish writers paid little heed to Roman authors such as Virgil, who were evidently read and valued. See Ó Cuív (1981). The legendary history of Ireland as a series of invasions of various peoples from lands including Scythia, Greece, and Spain is set out in the twelfth-century text, *Lebor Gabála* (‘Book of Invasions’), discussed later in this chapter. On the concept of Greek origins for the Irish people, see Poppe and Schlüter (2011); Jaski (2003).

[33] For examples of possible Greek influences on Irish literature, see Stanford (1970) 30–4; Stanford (1976) 78–81; Cox (1924); Clarke (2009); Moran (2012). The similarity of plot between the Greek legend of Phaedra and *Fingal Rónáin* was noted by its first editor, Kuno Meyer. See Mac Gearailt (2006–7).

[34] Meyer (1958). See also Stanford (1976) 75–8; Stanford (1970) 33–4; Murray (2006); Ní Sheaghdha (1984); Tristram (1989). It is worth remembering that some of the Irish texts may have been influenced by or derived from intermediary vernacular texts in English and French; for example, *Stair Ercuil ocus a Bás* (‘The Life and Death of Hercules’) is based on William

Caxton's English translation of the French work *Recueil des Histoires de Troyes* ('Anthology of the Histories of Troy'), composed by Raoul Lefèvre, *c.*1464. See Williams and Ford (1992) 139.

35 Calder (1922); Calder (1907); Stokes (1909). See also Miles (2011); Poppe (1995); Meyer (1959).

36 On the saga lists, which grouped stories into genres which provided many of the titles of the early Irish sagas, see Knott and Murphy (1966) 103–4; Ó Coileáin (1978) 180–1; Ní Bhrolcháin (2009) 6.

37 O'Hogan (2014).

38 The other major Roman settlements in Wales were the *civitas* capitals at Caerwent in Monmouthshire and Carmarthen in Pembrokeshire, along with a host of smaller fortresses across the country. On these Roman settlements, see Soulsby (1983); Davies and Jones (2006).

39 The tale has been edited, with an introduction and notes in English, by Roberts (2005a). Translations include Davies (2007) and Bollard (2007). The historical context of Magnus Maximus, a Roman general who seized power in AD 383, is described by Charles-Edwards (2013) 36–8. For a possible connection with the north Welsh prince Llywelyn ab Iorwerth (and consequently a date of composition of *c.*1215–17), see Roberts (2005b).

40 For Welsh genealogies which trace descent from Magnus Maximus, see Bartrum (1966), especially the genealogies in British Library, Harley MS 3859 and Oxford, Jesus College MS 20. On the belief that Magnus Maximus founded Brittany, see Charles-Edwards (2013) 56.

41 Joseph McMullen describes the tale as 'a textual enunciation of the attempt to hold on to "Welshness" sought by much of the Welsh nobility' and 'a powerful political tool in the pursuit of independent Welsh sovereignty'. See McMullen (2011) 232.

42 Charles-Edwards (2013) remarks that, in the post-Roman era, 'it remained uncertain whether the Britons would continue to be regarded as one among the peoples of the former Empire or be relegated to the status of barbarians' (27; see also 226–8). Twelfth-century historians such as Orderic of Vitalis, William of Malmesbury, and the author of the *Gesta Stephani* routinely referred to the Welsh as *barbari*, 'barbarians', Gillingham (2000) 36–7. The evidence of *Breuddwyd Maxen Wledig* suggests that the Welsh were countering such pejoratives by asserting their status as former citizens of Rome.

43 Pryce (2001) has documented the Welsh change in terminology for themselves from *Britones* to *Walenses* around the middle of the twelfth century, noting that Welsh poets continued to praise their patrons as 'British' throughout the thirteenth century.

44 Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* purported (like the work of Dictys) to be a translation of an original Greek text. Dares' version was edited by Meister (1873) and has been translated by Frazer (1966). On the dating of the *De Excidio* to the fifth or sixth century AD and its possible derivation from a common source shared by the earlier account of Dictys, *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* (dated to the fourth century AD though with possibly earlier, Greek origins), see Diane-Myrick (1993) 8–47.

45 On the dissemination of Guido's text in Middle English literature, see Benson (1980). Elizabeth S. Sklar (1992) proposed a lost Middle English intermediary between the *Gest Hystoriale* and the *Laud Troy Book*.

46 Allen (2003); Pizarro (2003).

47 Casali (2010) documents Classical versions of the legend which present Aeneas's flight from Troy as an act of treachery, compromising his status as epic hero (42–3).

[48] Prosperi (2013) has done some valuable work on the Greek sources of Dares and Dictys, and the transmission of the Troy story via Dares and Dictys into the orbit of the Italian humanists, especially Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio.

[49] For a fuller discussion of the Irish and Welsh texts, with references to editions and translations, see Fulton (2014).

[50] This is the order of the texts in at least five of the medieval manuscripts containing *Ystorya Dared*. See Fulton (2011) 146.

[51] For a full account of the text, see Carey (2009).

[52] Stokes (1880–1909) ll. 1299–305.

[53] Rhys and Evans (1890) 36, with my editing and translation.

[54] Mueller (2013) 30. Throughout his book, Mueller makes a strong case for the primacy of Guido's text, rather than Geoffrey of Monmouth, as the source of English historical understanding of Troy, and for the ambivalence or even scepticism expressed by Guido regarding Trojan values, an ambivalence to which English writers also subscribed.

[55] Tolkien and Gordon (1967) ll. 1–25, my translation.

[56] Morgan (1991) 41.

[57] Sweeney (2004).

[58] Estes (2000). This article confuses 'England' with 'Britain' which undermines the historical basis of its argument.

[59] Federico (2003) 34.

[60] Mueller (2013) 170.

[61] Cooper (1998) 466.

[62] Geoffrey Chaucer, *The House of Fame*, in Phillips and Havely (1997) 112–218, my translation.

[63] Spiegel (1983) 44. See also Spiegel (1997) 100–2.

[64] Phillips and Havely (1997) 141, n. 379.

[65] Hill (2000) Book XIV, l. 81.

[66] According to Fumo (2015), Ovid provided for Chaucer 'a forum for authorial self-reflection, through which Chaucer could articulate the nature and trajectory of his career' (211; see also 214, n. 37).

[67] James (1997) 14.

[68] For a summary of the twentieth-century debate between 'optimistic' and 'pessimistic' interpretations of the *Aeneid*, see Harrison (1990) 5–6; Kallendorf (2015).

[69] Ingledew (1994) describes Virgil's philosophy of history as 'genealogical, prophetic, and erotic' (668), offering a model of secular history that competed with that of Biblical history. For Virgil and his successors, including Geoffrey of Monmouth, 'history is the history of empire' (671).

[70] Galinsky (1975) 44. See also Federico (2003) 48.

[71] Phillips and Havely (1997) 186, note on ll. 1464–74.

[72] Philip Hardie (2012) charts the Virgilian and Ovidian versions of *fama* in Chaucer's *House of Fame* and in Alexander Pope's later adaptation, *The Temple of Fame* (see chap. 15). See also Havely (2015) on Chaucer's response to Dante in the *House of Fame*.

[73] Charles-Edwards (2013) 32.

5

The Politics of British Antiquity and the Descent from Troy in the Early Stuart Era

Philip Schwyzer

> For mine owne part, let Brutus be taken for the father, and founder of the British nation; I will not be of a contrary mind. Let the Britaines resolve still of their originall, to have proceeded from the Trojans … I will not gain-stand it. I wot full well, that Nations in old time for their originall, had recourse unto Hercules, & in later ages, to the Trojans. Let Antiquitie herein be pardoned, if by entermingling falsities and truthes, humane matters and divine together, it make the first beginnings of nations and cities more noble, sacred, and of greater majestie ….[1]

Thus, with an amused tolerance more devastating than any number of sceptical arguments, the antiquary William Camden (1551–1623) swept aside the time-honoured legend of Britain's Trojan origins.[2] Indulgently, Camden depicted Geoffrey of Monmouth's account of the Descent from Troy as a typical phase of national adolescence, comparable to a child's fantasy that he or she is really of royal blood. Writing near the close of the sixteenth century, Camden spoke for an English intelligentsia which saw itself as ready to put away childish (Welsh) things. Drawing almost exclusively on Classical sources for his vision of British antiquity—and content to draw a veil over the history of the island prior to Caesar's arrival—Camden and his followers chose reliable Roman records over the

medieval Welsh traditions which had for so long exerted a remarkable sway over the English historical imagination. Even the terms in which Camden couched his dismissal of indigenous lore signalled his Classical allegiances; the final sentence of the passage quoted above closely paraphrases Livy's remarks on Rome's hoariest fables in the preface to *The History of Rome*. Though the legendary monarchs of ancient Britain, from Brutus to King Lear to King Arthur, might still feed the imaginations of poets and playwrights, henceforth they would be all but ignored by serious students of the national past.

The story of how scholars abandoned their belief in Britain's Trojan origins and the legendary rulers of ancient Britain, turning to a vision of insular history centring on the Roman and Anglo-Saxon conquests, has been told many times.[3] This chapter is concerned with the other side of that story, which may be less familiar: the remarkable popular renaissance of the themes of Trojan descent and ancient British empire in the early-seventeenth century. Camden couched his scholarly dismissal in an acknowledgement, even an implicit endorsement, of continuing popular belief in the Trojan descent. He was right in his assumption that Geoffrey and the Troy narrative would not easily be ousted from the public sphere. Despite Brutus's banishment from the realm of serious history, the Descent from Troy was arguably known, accepted, and publicly celebrated by more people in the early Stuart era than at any point in the past. This chapter will focus on a range of factors that help account for this late efflorescence of the British History, including James VI and I's unsuccessful campaign for closer union between England and Scotland, and the local priorities of communities in Wales and London.

The Jacobean Campaign for the (Re)unification of Britain

In 1605, the pageant staged to celebrate the installation of London's new Lord Mayor was Anthony Munday's *Triumphes of Re-united Britannia*. The theme of the spectacle was the union of the nations of Britain under a new king, James I of England and VI of Scotland. Since his accession in 1603, James had made no secret of his desire to unite his two realms into a single kingdom. In advance of the legal and political union he hoped to bring about, James had already in 1604 adopted the royal style of 'King of

Great Britain' by proclamation.[4] His grander aim was to rule a genuinely unified British people, who would dispense once and for all with the divisive names of England and Scotland. The union project was celebrated in an outpouring of literary productions, from learned treatises to poems, plays, and pageants like *The Triumphes of Re-united Britannia*.[5]

On what grounds, though, did Munday's pageant refer to the *re*unification of Britain? In common with many other pieces of unionist propaganda, especially those aimed at a popular audience, the pageant seems more concerned with ancient British history than contemporary archipelagic politics—or rather, it addresses contemporary political themes primarily through the lens of antiquity. In its published form, *The Triumphes* is preceded by a short treatise on the first inhabitation and subsequent history of the island from the age of Noah, whose grandson Samothes founded the kingdom of Celtica, down to the Trojan Brutus, who ruled over the whole of the island and bestowed upon it the name of Britain. In support of his vision of British antiquity, Munday cites authorities including the English antiquaries John Bale and John Leland, and the Welsh scholars John Prise and Humphrey Llwyd. Like Prise in his *Historiae Britannicae Defensio*, he places much stock in the long continuity of the bardic tradition.[6] King James is celebrated repeatedly in the pageant as a successor to Brutus, 'by whose happye comming to the Crowne, England, Wales, & Scotland [are] re-united, and made one happy Britania again'.[7]

The idea that Britain had once been united under a single monarch was of crucial importance to the unionist cause. Like Protestant reformers in the age of Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell, Jacobean unionists insisted that their programme was not an innovation, but a restoration of the island's ideal and original condition. Just as much Protestant scholarship in the sixteenth century was bent on answering the question 'where was your church before Luther?' so unionist writers in the early-seventeenth century needed a convincing answer to the question 'where was your Kingdom of Great Britain before James?' James himself insisted that in adopting the new style, 'wee doe not Innovate or assume to Us any new thing.' Pointedly, he referred to 'the blessed Union, or rather Reuniting of … England and Scotland under one Imperiall Crowne', and commented ruefully on the warfare that had existed between the two countries 'ever

from their first Separation'.[8] At what point in history England and Scotland had been united under an imperial crown, and under what circumstances that union had been sundered, are matters left delicately unspecified in the royal proclamation. However, the reference can only be to Brutus the Trojan and his fabled descendants in the millennium before Caesar.

The illustrious antiquary William Camden, whose dismissal of Geoffrey of Monmouth has been quoted above, paid due respect to the new monarch's British ambitions. In the 1607 edition of his *Britannia*, at the conclusion of a discussion of Anglo-Saxon names, Camden inserted a note, as if seized by sudden inspiration:

> even whiles we are perusing this worke, King James invested in the Monarchie of the whole Isle, by the propitious favour and grace of God, in the right of his owne inheritance, and with the generall applause of all good men; to the end that this said Isle, which is one entire thing in it selfe, encircled within one compasse of the Ocean; in his owne person, under one Imperiall Crowne, and Diademe, in one communitie of Language, Religion, Lawes, and Judiciall processes; to the increase of perpetuall felicitie, and oblivion of old enmitie, should beare also one name: hath in the second yeare of his raigne by an Edict published and proclaimed through his Realmes, assumed the name, title, and stile of King of Great Britaine, in all matters generally, save only in Writs, and formalities of Law Instruments … [9]

While Camden's enthusiasm for the proposed union of the realms may have been genuine, the value of his favoured Classical sources for the union project was limited at best. If *Britannia* was useful in demonstrating that Britain was the true and ancient name of the island, it was no help at all in arguing that the island had ever been united. The Britain Caesar and his successors described was not ruled by one King or Emperor, but divided into dozens of hostile, inward-looking polities. Organizing his topographical treatise according to the native kingdoms or tribes noted by the ancient geographers—Danmonii, Durotriges, Belgae, and so forth—Camden seemed to privilege primordial regional difference over a common national heritage. If antiquity was destiny, then disunity was part of Britain's inheritance and its fate.

Finding only weak support in Camden, enthusiastic unionists like Anthony Munday turned to a slightly earlier generation of Welsh and English antiquaries. Chief among these was Humphrey Llwyd of Denbighshire (d. 1568), who preceded Camden as the author of the first

printed treatise on the antiquities and topography of Britain as a whole, the *Commentarioli Britannicae Descriptionis Fragmentum* (1572). Translated into English as *The Breviary of Britain* (1573), Llwyd's work exerted a direct or indirect influence over major English authors including Spenser, Drayton, and Milton.[10] Unlike Camden, Llwyd drew on both Celtic and Classical sources with equal erudition and respect. A good part of *The Breviary* is devoted to identifying the modern locales correlating with the place-names in Ptolemy's *Geographia* and the *Antonine Itinerary*. Yet Llwyd's Classical learning was matched by his immersion in Welsh tradition. He deduced the original form and meaning of English and Scottish place-names on the basis of Welsh etymologies; he was, moreover, an unswerving believer in Geoffrey of Monmouth and the history of Brutus the Trojan. Unlike Polydore Vergil or Camden, Llwyd was not greatly troubled by apparent contradictions between his Celtic and Classical sources. Even drastic discrepancies between Roman and British authors could be accounted for with the explanation that the conquerors were naturally biased against the native Britons, and had a bad habit of mangling Celtic names as well as Celtic bodies.

Whereas Camden imagined Britain at the time of Caesar's arrival as a patchwork of feuding tribes, Llwyd followed native chroniclers in reporting the existence of a 'British Empire' persisting both before and after the era of Roman occupation. Indeed, *The Breviary* contains the first use of the phrase 'British Empire' in a printed English work (a theme that Llwyd's acolyte John Dee would swiftly seek to popularize and bring to the attention of the Queen).[11] For Llwyd, the term 'Briton' implied not simply an inhabitant of Britain, but a member of a united realm; as he argued, the Welsh word for 'Briton' (*Brython*, or *Brittwn*) 'cometh not from the ancient name of the island *Prydain*, but from Brutus, the king'.[12] Llwyd further claimed that the island in ancient times had been ethnically and linguistically homogenous, since the Scots and Picts had arrived on the shores of northern Britain only in late antiquity, around the same time that the Anglo-Saxons had commenced their conquests in the south. In ancient times, then, the Britons had been one people speaking one language and united under one king. The English authors of commendatory poems prefixed to Twyne's translation praised Llwyd for upholding the Brutus tradition and, with it, a common British identity which had long been obscured or denied.

The ideological implications of Llwyd's scholarship are illustrated by the furious rebuke his treatise drew from the Scottish scholar George Buchanan. Dedicating his *Rerum Scoticarum Historia* (1582) to the young James VI of Scotland, Buchanan did all he could to undermine the vision of an imperial Britain which James himself would propound when he came to the English throne two decades later. Buchanan's history begins with a thundering assault on Llwyd's proposed Celtic etymology of the name of Britain. The name, Buchanan insisted, was attested by Greek and Latin authors long before any evidence of its use in Welsh or Old Brythonic; moreover, Latin texts made clear that the term had never been intended to apply to the whole of the island or to Scotland, but only to the region south of Hadrian's wall. Brutus was an arrant myth. In Buchanan's account, the Britons, Scots, and Picts had all inhabited the island in antiquity, being descended from different branches of the Gauls or Celt-Iberians; they had spoken closely related Celtic languages and been on friendly terms, but never under a common ruler. Whereas Llwyd had looked to Celtic languages (specifically Welsh) as the key to knowledge about Britain's past and essential identity, Buchanan celebrated their coming extinction; it was laughable, he observed, that Llwyd could not figure out even how to put his own Welsh surname into decent Latin:

> What, I beseech you, would Lud do in this case, if he were to write the History of Britain in Latin? With all his rust of Barbarism, I believe, he would scarce know how to pronounce the Genuine Names of the Brittons. For seeing he vexes himself so much how he should write Lud, either *Lhuyd* or *Llud*, or else bare *Ludd*, neither of which can be writ, pronounced, or heard amongst Latinists without regret: If he retains the true Sound, he will make not a Latin, but a Semi-Barbarous Oration.[13]

Although not implacably opposed to union between the nations of Britain, Buchanan held that the bonds between them derived from their reception of the international Classical inheritance, rather than the Celtic roots and British myths championed by Llwyd.[14]

Buchanan's political vision influenced some writers on the union question, notably David Hume of Godscroft, whose *De Unione Insulae Britannicae* (1605) advocated a new British state organized along Roman and quasi-republican principles.[15] Yet a larger number of union supporters, especially those addressing a popular audience south of the border, based their appeals on Humphrey Llwyd's vision of an anciently united British

imperium. The core of the argument was enticingly simple. Britain had begun as a united realm with Brutus as its sole ruler; hence, union under a single monarch or emperor remained its natural political state. In Munday's *Triumphes of Reunited Britannia*, which cites Llwyd as an authority, Brutus welcomes James as the 'second Brute' by whom England, Wales, and Scotland will be 'knit againe in blessed unity'.[16] Shakespeare's *King Lear*, likewise, explores the consequences of the division of a united British kingdom centuries before the Roman occupation.[17] Numerous other examples of unionist literature from the first years of James's reign—by diverse authors including the genealogist George Owen Harry, the poet William Harbert, and the Bishop of Bristol, John Thornborough—follow Munday and James himself in celebrating the union as a restoration of Britain's original Celtic condition.[18]

Among the finest and most provocative literary works to emerge from the Jacobean union debate—second, perhaps, only to *King Lear*—is Michael Drayton's long, topographical poem, *Poly-Olbion* (1612). Organized along similar lines to Llwyd's *Breviary of Britain* and Camden's *Britannia* (both of which served as sources), the poem moves steadily across the map of Britain in a series of songs, letting the rivers and hills of different regions tell their own stories. *Poly-Olbion* is imbued with a deep love for the legends of British antiquity, including the Brutus tradition, which in Drayton's mind is naturally linked to the idea of a united island. The theme of union reaches a crescendo in the Fifth Song, set in Wales, where the river Severn arbitrates a dispute between the waterways of Wales and England by reminding them that they are one nation. Although 'th' ancient British race' succumbed to the Saxons and Normans, the bloodline of Brutus lives on in the Tudors and Stuarts:

> By whom three sever'd Realmes in one shall firmlie stand,
>
> As Britain-founding Brute first Monarchiz'd the Land:
>
> …
>
> Why strive yee then for that, in little time that shall
> (As you are all made one) be one unto you all … [?][19]

Yet despite the presence of such passages, *Poly-Olbion*, like *King Lear*, is ultimately ambivalent in its treatment of Celtic antiquity and the closely related theme of British union. One source of this ambivalence is the long gestation of the work, which Drayton had begun as early as the mid-1590s. The scope and, as he must have recognized, the political significance of the project were transformed after 1603, and passages such as that quoted above clearly reflect the circumstances of the Jacobean union debate. Yet by 1612, when the poem was finally printed (as a first instalment), the situation had changed again. The English Parliament had effectively quashed James's plans for closer legal union in 1607; in the years that followed, a united Britain might still serve for some as a nostalgia-tinged ideal, but did not constitute a viable political programme. Drayton's attitude was further complicated by his settled distaste for King James, who had denied him the preferment he hoped for; while the poem celebrates the survival of the ancient British bloodline in the Stuarts, the name of the reigning Stuart who had proposed to make the island one under his own sceptre appears nowhere in the poem.

A second reason for *Poly-Olbion*'s ambivalent approach to Britain is that it is really the work of two authors, with very different visions of British antiquity. In the 1612 edition, each of Drayton's songs was followed by the 'Illustrations' or annotations supplied by the young legal scholar John Selden. Drayton and Selden liked and admired one another, but in their understandings of the British past they were wildly mismatched. Where Drayton embraced the Welsh bards as his poetic models, and staunchly defended every ancient legend from Brutus onward, Selden preferred his more reliable Latin and Greek (and, indeed, Hebrew and Arabic) sources. Drayton prefaced the poem with a special address to 'my friends, the Cambro-Britons', in which he acknowledges his debt to 'my much loved (the lerned) Humphrey Floyd [i.e. Llwyd]', and explains that his Welsh friendships have 'made me the more seek into the antiquities of your Country'. Selden, by contrast, in his own epistle to the readers of the book, begins by disclaiming any faith in the British History, with its 'intollerable Antichronismes, incredible reports, and Bardish impostures':

> Being not very Prodigall of my Historicall Faith, after Explanation, I oft adventure on Examination, and Censure. The Author, in Passages of first Inhabitants, Name, State, and Monarchique succession in this Isle, followes Geffrey ap Arthur, Polychronicon, Matthew

> of Westminster, and such more. Of their Traditions, for that one so much controverted, and by Cambro-Britons still maintayned, touching the Trojan Brute, I have (but as an Advocat for the Muse) argued; disclaiming in it, if alledg'd for my own Opinion.[20]

Selden's reliance on Classical sources is so absolute that he comes close to suggesting that Britain had no existence before the Greeks and Romans wrote of it: 'Briefly, untill Polybius … no Greeke mentions the Isle; untill Lucretius (some C. years later) no Roman hath exprest a thought of us; untill Cæsars Commentaries, no piece of its description was known, that is now left to posterity. For time therefore preceding Cæsar, I dare trust none.'

Although Selden is content to cite 'learned Lhuyd' on various matters of local history and etymology, he is more akin to Buchanan in his scorn for the Brutus tradition, and also in the emphasis he places on the disparate origins of Britain's ancient inhabitants. The Welsh story of Trojan descent through Brutus is indefensible, he argues—but assuming that the ancient Britons intermarried with Roman settlers, then the modern Welsh are indeed descended from the Trojans through the Roman line, going back to Aeneas. As for the Anglo-Saxons, if they are truly descended from those whom Strabo calls the Sacans, a branch of the Scythian people, then they are related to the Scots, who also claim Scythian descent. Selden can be more than a little guileful—typically, he presents himself as trying to shore up Drayton's vision of Britain by finding a compatible argument in Classical sources; in fact, his glosses work to undermine any sense of a distinct British identity, merging the island's various peoples into the great tribes known to the Classical geographers.

The conflicts between Drayton and Selden are clear enough, but they are not the only tensions evident in *Poly-Olbion*'s vision of British antiquity. In spite of passages in praise of British union, the poem's real centre lies in its praise of local histories and local particularities.[21] What most interests Drayton about Dorset (for instance) is how it differs from (for instance) Devon. What interests him about Wales is how it differs from England. For him, Humphrey Llwyd is not a British writer, but a distinctively Welsh or Cambro-British writer, who defended specifically Welsh traditions. This extends, paradoxically, to the theme of British union. Almost all of the passages in the poem dealing with Brutus and the

ancient British realm occur in songs devoted to Wales or Cornwall. When, in the Eleventh Song, the poem crosses the Dee from Wales into England, Drayton is soon writing as enthusiastically about Anglo-Saxon rulers and their deeds as he did about the ancient Britons. (Or rather, he lets his hills and rivers sing about their local heroes and tradition—it is surely more verisimilar, Drayton reasons, for a Mercian river to sing about the deeds of Offa than of Brutus and his kin.)

This, I suggest, illuminates a fundamental conundrum facing the poets and playwrights who sought to mobilize the legends of British antiquity to advance the theme of British union under King James. The historical traditions that were meant to underwrite a united Britain were the traditions of a specific British people, the Welsh. Even the term ‘Briton’ was understood by most insular authors, including William Camden, to refer to the Welsh in particular; how then could it be embraced as the common identity of all King James’s subjects? Although Humphrey Llwyd, followed by English writers including Drayton and Selden, had favoured the neologism ‘Cambro-Briton’—a compound that invited the coining of the companion terms Anglo-Briton and Scoto-Briton—, in practice the prefix ‘Cambro-’ worked not as a modifier but as an intensifier; the Welsh remained, as Llwyd himself boasted, ‘the very true Britons by birth’. The fundamental obstacle to employing the Brutus tradition to promote British union, then, was not that the tradition was transparently false, but that its accustomed function was to underwrite rather than to erase insular divisions, to distinguish rather than to unite communities. Long after the failure of the Jacobean union project, the fabled Descent from Troy, with its curious mixture of Celtic and Classical referents, continued to serve as a privileged marker of local identities, as I shall discuss in the next section.

Troynovant Must Not be Burnt

Throughout the early Stuart period, as Classicism reigned largely triumphant in historical scholarship and political discourse, two communities would exhibit a particularly stubborn commitment to their traditional ties with Troy. One of these communities was, unsurprisingly, the Welsh gentry. In defiance of scholarly opinion over the Wye, Welsh

gentleman-antiquaries such as Robert Vaughan of Hengwrt continued to defend the Brutus tradition in manuscript tracts and correspondence at least into the 1650s.[22] We should not, however, leap to the conclusion that the survival of old historical traditions in Wales had something to do with its 'peripheral' status, far from the epicentres of new learning and thought. For, as it happens, a comparably resolute and voluble community of Trojans was to be found in London itself, celebrated by many of its seventeenth-century citizens as New Troy, or Troynovant.

Just as William Camden was prepared to indulge those Britons who insisted on their descent from Brutus, he had a smile and wink for those Londoners 'who over curiously have derived Trinobantes [the tribe anciently inhabiting Middlesex] of Troy, as a man would say *Troia Nova*, that is, *New Troy.* But I wish them well, and that heerein they may please themselves'.[23] The antiquary's droll deference to the unenlightened is not as benign as it might first appear. Camden does more than merely gesture to where the truth really lies. Inviting his readers to share in his amusement, he marks those who stick by their discredited stories as outsiders to the circle of knowledge and sensibility fashioned by his *Britannia*. For no small number of readers, chuckling at Camden's sly digs must have constituted the moment in which they themselves relinquished any vestige of belief in the Trojan descent. What might have been a fairly bitter pill—sacrificing a noble and Classical lineage for origins tainted with savagery and obscurity—was made considerably more palatable by the opportunity to set oneself above and apart from the benighted crowd.

The very blending of intellectual and social attitudes elicited by the *Britannia* is replicated in a range of late Elizabethan and early Stuart texts, including several plays, which represent common people as gullible believers in the Descent from Troy and associated legends. Shakespeare seems to associate belief in both the Trojan descent and King Arthur with the commoners and riff-raff of London, the hangers-on of Sir John Falstaff. Thus Mistress Quickly in *Henry V* absurdly avers that the dead Falstaff is 'in Arthur's bosom' while Pistol in the same play twice derides the Welshman Fluellen as a 'base Trojan'.[24] At the extreme end of this association of the Trojan legend with the base and ignorant is the Welsh beggar Caradoc in Thomas Randolph's Caroline comedy *Hey for Honesty, Down with Knavery* (1651), who defends the superiority of his lice as descending from Phrygian heroes:

> Her lice are petter a pedecree as the goodst of them all. Her lice come ap Shinkin, ap Shon, ap Owen, ap Richard, ap Morgan, ap Hugh, ap Brutus, ap Silvius, ap Aeneas, and so up my shoulder. And her lice will not deshenerate from her pedicree, precious coles! Her ancestors fought in the wars of Troy, by this leek, as lustily as the lice of Troilus.[25]

The beggar Caradoc exemplifies the perception that to believe in the Descent from Troy—that is, to be a Brutan—is to be Brutish. The pun on Brute was an old one, but in the early-seventeenth century it seemed increasingly telling.

In the same period that the educated classes were moving, at first gradually and then rapidly and definitively, away from belief in the Descent from Troy, we can perceive a marked tendency, in both literary and antiquarian sources, to associate belief in the Descent with the lower classes. In part, this undoubtedly reflects an impulse to dissociate oneself from a newly embarrassing social error—like dropping one's H's or calling a napkin a 'serviette', belief in the Descent from Troy is stigmatized as vulgar and oafish in the period when the elite are abandoning it. Social boundaries are marked with a vengeance in Buchanan's denunciation of Humphrey Llwyd's Celticism: 'both *Greeks* and *Latins*, shall be of greater accompt with me, than all the Hodgepodge Trash of *Lud*, raked by him out of the Dunghil, on purpose to be ridicul'd, and preserved only for ignominy … '[26] For Buchanan as for Randolph, the old traditions seem not only absurd but unclean, tainted, beyond the pale of civility.

But there is more to the story than this. The curious thing is that in the very period in which the educated were rushing to renounce the Troy narrative, and ritually denouncing it as base and lowly, the popularity of these traditions seems genuinely to have grown among the commoner sort, at least and especially in London. Difficult as it is to track shifts in popular culture at a distance of four or five centuries, there is ample evidence to suggest that a higher proportion of Londoners would both have heard of and perceived an immediate relevance in the Descent from Troy in 1600 or 1620 than would have done so a hundred years earlier. Taking the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries together, the popularity and pertinence of the traditions seems inversely proportional to their scholarly credibility, the one rising as the other falls.

In spite of Henry VII's proclaimed descent from ancient British rulers, there is remarkably little evidence of popular belief in British History in

the early Tudor period, either in London or in England as a whole. Positive references to the tradition figure primarily in Latin histories and verse, often by foreign-born authors such as Bernard Andre and, of course, in Welsh chronicles and bardic poetry.[27] John Rastell in his *Pastyme of People* (1529) was prepared to 'take that story of Galfridus but for a feyned fable'.[28] Few, if any, English poems of the period celebrated London's status as Troynovant as heartily as did the Scot William Dunbar:

> Gladdith anon, thou lusty Troynovaunt,
> Citie that some tyme cleped was New Troy;
> In all the erth, imperiall as thou stant,
> Pryncesse of townes, of pleasure and of joy ….[29]

By contrast, in the period 1590–1630, we find any number of plays and pageants making reference to Brutus and especially to Troynovant. In a telling shift, two giant statues in the London Guildhall, identified in the early-sixteenth century as Samson and Goliath, had by the century's end been rechristened Corineus and Gogmagog—after a follower of Brutus and the native British giant he defeated.[30] The ancient kings who featured in Munday's *Triumphes of Reunited Britannia* would have been familiar figures to the Londoners watching the Lord Mayor's Show in 1605, even if they did not find the implicit argument for legal union with Scotland wholly convincing.

Reminders of London's antiquity and peerless origins remained standard fare in Lord Mayors' pageants and similar civic spectacles well into the seventeenth century—fulfilling Camden's prediction that Londoners would continue to 'please themselves' in this matter. In John Webster's 1624 pageant for the Merchant Taylors, *Monuments of Honor*, we find '*Troynovant* or the City, in throned in rich Habilaments' occupying the highest seat in Honour's Temple, with Antwerp, Paris, Rome, Venice, and Constantinople ranged admiringly beneath her.[31] Similar celebrations of the capital as New Troy recur in pageants, plays, poetry, and prose directed at the London populace by writers like Thomas Dekker (whose 1612 Mayor's Show was *Troia-Nova Triumphans*), John Taylor the Water Poet, and Thomas Heywood. As late as 1637, Heywood is still proclaiming London's descent in essentially unaltered terms in *Londini Speculum or*

London's Mirror: 'Her antiquity she deriveth from Brute, lineally descended from Aeneas, the son of Anchises and Venus, and by him erected … before the nativity of our blessed saviour, one thousand one hundred and eight; first called by him Trinovantum or Troy-novant, New Troy, to continue the remembrance of the old.'[32]

That Brutus and Troynovant found and retained a place on the pageant wagons for something like half a century after their expulsion from the history books is beyond doubt. But what are we to make of this record of enduring civic popularity? Fifty years ago, Frederick Levy gave brief notice to this phenomenon, terming it an instance of 'cultural lag': '[John] Taylor and Anthony Munday, and others like them, writing for the least educated segment of the populace, continued to enshrine myths that more serious historians had treated skeptically a generation or more earlier.'[33]

On the face of it, the reference to 'cultural lag'—meaning the failure of popular perceptions and practices to keep pace with the technological or intellectual avant-garde—seems appropriate enough. (A modern example of such 'lag' in perceptions of British antiquity would be the Anglo-Saxon 'conquest' of Britain which, disputed if not dismissed by most archaeologists, remains a staple of the popular historical imagination.) Yet, some years before Levy, the sociologist C. Wright Mills had pinpointed the fundamental problem with theories of cultural lag:

> The notion of 'cultural lag' … suggests the need to change something in order to 'bring it into line' … . Whatever is thought to be 'lagging' exists in the present, but its reasons-for-being are held to lie in the past. Judgments are thus disguised as statements about a time sequence … . Those who use the notion of cultural lag do not usually examine the positions of the interest groups and decision-makers which might be back of varying 'rates of change' in different areas of society.[34]

Levy's resort to the notion of cultural lag fails precisely to consider what Londoners may have perceived as being at stake in the theme of New Troy. That something made Troynovant powerfully attractive to certain urban interest groups in the early Stuart period is beyond dispute for, as we have seen, enthusiasm for the theme did not simply remain static in the period, but actually grew. In the period 'a generation or more earlier' when 'serious historians' are said to have been growing sceptical, there is little evidence of interest in London's Trojan past among 'the least educated segment of the populace'. Troynovant is not a prominent theme in mid-

sixteenth-century civic pageants and progresses, whereas in Jacobean pageants it is ubiquitous. In other words, we are not dealing with a case of inertia, but of some fresh impetus, a cultural acceleration of interest in Trojan origins.

More useful than 'cultural lag' in this case is the terminology devised by Raymond Williams to describe the persistence of elements of the past in contemporary cultural processes. Williams draws an important distinction between the 'residual' and the 'archaic':

> Any culture includes available elements of its past, but their place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable. I would call the 'archaic' that which is wholly recognized as an element of the past, to be observed, to be examined, or even on occasion to be consciously 'revived', in a deliberately specializing way. What I mean by the 'residual' is very different. The residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but it is still active in the cultural process, not only and often not at all as an element of the past, but as an effective element of the present.[35]

The London Lord Mayor's Show as it exists today is undoubtedly an example of the archaic, for all its capacity to pull sizeable crowds. In Jacobean and Caroline England, by contrast, it was achieving the height of its aesthetic and political significance.[36] Civic pageantry was a central means whereby the City of London defined itself and its relationship to royal power. That the status of London as the New Troy should be so crucial to this culturally central medium suggests that it, too, was 'an effective element of the present'.

Williams goes on to 'distinguish [the] aspect of the residual, which may have an alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture, from that active manifestation of the residual … which has been wholly or largely incorporated into the dominant culture'. At first glance, the Descent from Troy as understood and invoked in early Stuart London would seem to fall into the latter category. There can be no denying that the theme has strong conservative and traditionalist associations. The idea of Troynovant is powerfully associated with the legitimacy of established institutions: the monarchy, to be sure, but equally the urban guilds. Yet it would be a mistake to conclude that the identification of their city with Troy had, for early Stuart Londoners, no critical edge—no flavour of an 'alternative or even oppositional relation to the dominant culture'. Rather, as Philip Robinson observes, 'by invoking the matter of Troy the mayoral

pageants could conjure up equivocal or even subversive images while appearing to do just the opposite'.[37] Emphasis on London's primal antiquity could potentially be read as investing the city with an authority rivalling that of the monarchy itself; Troynovant could thus stand in opposition to the pretensions of Stuart absolutism.[38] Moreover, in this as in every period, the theme of Trojan descent was inherently double-edged. Marion Turner's remarks on Troynovant in the fourteenth century apply with equal force to the Stuart era: 'Troy represents both the ideal city, prototype of imperial Rome, and a fallen city which destroyed itself through lust, deviant desires, and the misuse of power … . the city of origin symbolized both strength and treachery, courage and cowardly desires.'[39] Unlike Sodom, say, or Jerusalem, Troy did not owe its fall to the sins of the mass of its citizens so much as to the moral and military failures of its leaders. Seen from the perspective of a Trojan *bourgeois*, the whole story from the abduction of Helen to the admission of the horse comes across as a saga of unalleviated fecklessness, self-absorption, and incompetence in the ruling class.

The complexity and ambivalence of the early Stuart conception of London as Troy is conveyed most eloquently in the recurrent image of the city as constructed literally from the sparks or cinders of its predecessor. As Dekker avers in *Brittannia's Honor* (1628): 'So famous shee is for her *Buildings*, that *Troy* has leap'd out of her own Cinders, to build Her Wals.'[40] In *The Dead Tearme* (1608), the same author has the city declare:

> *Brute* from whom I tooke my byrth … called me *Troynovant* or *Trinovant*, and sometimes *Trinobant*, to revive (in me) the memory of that Citty which was turned into Cinders, and that for all the spight of those Gods who hated it, there should be a new *Troy* which was my selfe.[41]

The image of London as a city re-edified out of Troy's cinders also occurs in Robert Chester's *The Annals of Great Britaine* (1611):

> That is the *Britaines* towne old *Troynovant*,
> The which the wandring-*Troyans* Sonne did frame,
> When after ship wracke he a place did want,
> For to revive his Honor-splitted Name,
> And raisd againe the cinders of his Fame ….[42]

As Robert Hayman summed it up in an epigram, ‘As from the old Phoenix ashes anew springs: / So from Troyes ashes, London her birth brings.’[43]

These early Stuart images of London as a city built literally out of Trojan cinders hark back to the established trope that figures the Tudor bloodline as a spark descending from Brutus and ultimately from Troy. This image, which appears to originate in fifteenth-century Welsh poetry, finds its definitive expression in Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, where Merlin is made to prophesy the Tudor redemption of ‘the antique Troian blood’:

> There shall a sparke of fire, which hath long-while
> Bene in his ashes raked up, and hid,
> Be freshly kindled in the fruitfull Ile
> Of *Mona*, where it lurked in exile;
> Which shall breake forth into bright burning flame,
> And reach into the house, that beares the stile
> Of royall maiesty and soveraigne name ….[44]

Like Spenser and his bardic predecessors, Dekker and his contemporaries imagine the ancient glory of Troy rekindled by means of some long-smouldering fragment that provides the link between the present and the ancient past. What distinguishes the early Stuart versions of the trope from their Tudor antecedents is, first of all, that the spark or cinder functions as a figure for urban rather than dynastic lineage. It is the stuff in London’s walls, not James’s veins, that provides the cherished link between the English present and the far-distant Trojan past. Secondly, and more unsettlingly, the Stuart ‘cinder’ differs from the Tudor ‘spark’ in that it is not simply a metaphor for lineage, but a palpable remainder and reminder of Troy’s dismal fate. This is not a spark from a friendly—and purely metaphorical—hearth, but the real remnant of a ruinous conflagration. Does London’s inheritance from Troy enhance its prestige or encode within it the possibility of similar destruction? These early Stuart texts cast doubt on whether it is possible to enjoy one half of the Trojan inheritance without the other.

The doubts and tensions that are present but generally fairly muted in early Stuart celebrations of London as Troynovant would take on greater force and poignancy in the 1640s, the end of the period under

consideration here. In the context of the Civil Wars, both roundheads and royalists made use of the Descent from Troy. Writing in Parliament's cause, Henry Parker warned against *The Trojan Horse of the Presbyteriall Government* (1646), which he saw coming 'with the belly full of armed men, to take our Troy-novant'.[45] Yet the most penetrating engagement with the Troynovant tradition was, unsurprisingly, to be found in royalist journalism. A broadside entitled *Troy-Novant Must Not be Burnt* appeared on 8 May 1648, in the midst of the second Civil War. Days before, pro-royalist riots by apprentices and others had been suppressed by the New Model Army. Cromwell himself had supposedly demanded, 'What if it were for the glory of God this City were burnt?'[46] In a poem urgently engaged with the struggles of the moment, the image of the spark from Troy is explicitly if ambiguously tied to the threat of urban destruction, even as it remains a figure for civic lineage and honour:

> What is there none that will the city right?
> Was all their story by feirce Vulcans spight.
> Burnt in Ben Johnsons study; Let us rake,
> And from those ashes new-liv'd, sparkles rake.
> Not to consume our Troy, (as he did Rome.
> Who made him musick of his Citys doome:)
> Rather such straines shall start from our strucke lyre
> Which shall build up our Thebes, not set on fire.
> Such a bright Beame we'd dart, that shall renew
> Your Ancestours, and bring their Acts to view.

The ostensible aim of the poem is to celebrate London's proud history of repelling rebels and invaders, from the loyal citizens who withstood the Peasants' Uprising of 1381 down to the 'brave Trojans' who are called to rise against the upstart oppressors of the present day. Repeated references to fire and urban doom darken the tone, however, while the reminder of royal irresponsibility in the form of city-burning Nero complicates the poem's politics. This poem is, like almost all early Stuart invocations of Troynovant, both loyalist and royalist—yet its opening lines gesture unmistakably to royal failings, and the 'ancestors' invoked here are clearly not members of the royal bloodline, but rather earlier generations of London citizens. The poem concludes by endeavouring to associate

Cromwell rather than Charles with the figure of the tyrant Nero; yet the king himself is entirely forgotten in these lines, which propound what amounts to a Trojan alliance against imperial tyranny:

> When Nero threatned Rome with glorious Fire,
> The news was next, the Tyrant did expire.
> Go Oliver, thy malice not prevailes.
> Thou hast two enemies, London and Wales.
> And both in thy sure ruines hope to laugh;
> Wales be thy Tombe, London thy Epitaph.

Those most unlikely of allies, London and Wales, who stood firm together against William Camden and the revolution in British historiography, are now represented standing undaunted and united against a different sort of revolution. It is tempting to conclude that for seventeenth-century devotees of New Troy, time had simply stood still. The whole point of the Troynovant theme in civic pageantry is, after all, to suggest that time can do just that, or at least that ancient essences can survive unaltered into the present. Yet much had changed in the first half of the seventeenth century, even for those most firmly committed to time-honoured traditions. Not least of those changes is the emergence of the hoary old Celtic–Classical myth of Troynovant as the badge of an independent and sceptical civic patriotism.

Philip Schwyzer, *The Politics of British Antiquity and the Descent from Troy in the Early Stuart Era* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0005

[1] Camden (1610) 8–9. For the continuing influence of Camden's *Britannia*, see Constantine in this volume.

[2] For the medieval tradition of Trojan Britishness, see Fulton's previous chapter. For an instance of Trojan Britishness relating to Scotland, see Coira in this volume, 110.

[3] See, e.g., Curran (2002); McKisack (1971); Levy (1967); Kendrick (1950). There is some debate over the precise point in the sixteenth century when the tide turned decisively against Geoffrey of Monmouth. Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (printed in 1534) has often been described as providing the crucial humanist nail in Geoffrey's coffin. How, Polydore asked, could Britain have remained undiscovered until the arrival of Brutus and his Trojan followers when the

island is visible from France on a clear day? How had the extraordinary exploits of Brutus's descendants gone entirely unnoticed by Roman historians? Yet Polydore's scepticism may well have had the paradoxical effect of prolonging Geoffrey's authority among at least some British historians. The mere fact that Polydore was an Italian Catholic cleric, publishing at the height of the Henrician Reformation, more or less ensured that Protestant patriots would rush to Geoffrey's defence, prolonging his influence by half a century or more. See Carley (1984); Schwyzer (2004) 31–8.

[4] James I (1604). On the union controversy, see Galloway (1986).

[5] For examples and discussion of the literature for and against union, see Galloway and Levack (1985); Kanemura (2014) 155–76; Waurechen (2013); Parker (2013); Woolf (1990) 55–64. On Munday's *Triumphes*, see Robinson (2013); Hill (2006).

[6] 'Many of these Bards lived among the Britans, before the birth of Christ, as Plenidius and Oronius. Since then, Thalestine, the two Merlins, Melkin, Elaskirion and others. Among the Welshmen nowe of late daies, David Die, Iollo Gough, David ap Williams, and divers others remayning yet amongest them, and called in their owne language Bardhes', Munday (1605) sig. A2v. Munday's immediate source is Holinshed (1587), where most of the names are derived from Prise, with additional antique and apocryphal bards drawn from Bale's *Scriptorum Illustrium Majoris Britanniae … Catalogus* (Basel, 1557–9) and other sources. Cf. Prise (2015) 45–9.

[7] Munday (1605) sig. B2r.

[8] James I (1604) 3, 1.

[9] Camden (1610) 141. The nature of Camden's investment in the union project may be indicated by the note in the margin to this passage: 'The name of Britaine brought into use againe.'

[10] On Llwyd's literary influence, see Llwyd (2011) 24–30.

[11] Henry (1972); Armitage (2000) 46–7.

[12] Llwyd (2011) 59. Llwyd's word '*Britwn*', presented as '*Britvvn*' in the printed text of the *Commentarioli Fragmentum*, is transcribed as 'Brituun' in Thomas Twyne's translation, *The Breviary of Britain*. With an eye to medieval usage, Llwyd offers '*Brython*' as the plural form of '*Britwn*', whereas in modern Welsh '*Brython*' is the preferred singular form.

[13] '*Quid hic rogo faceret Luddus, si ei latine sit scribenda historia Britannica? Ipsa genuina Brittonum nomina qomodo enunciaret, cum tota sua barbarica rubigne opinor non haberet. Nam cum tam anxiese torquet, quomodo Luddum scribat, Lhuydumne, an Lludum, an vero Luddum, quorum nullum nec Latinis literis exprimi, nec ore latiali efferri, nec ab auribus latinis sine fastidio audiri potest. Si verum sonum retineat, non Latinam sed semibarbaram faciet orationem.*' Buchanan (1582) fol. 3r; translation in Buchanan (1690) 7.

[14] Macinnes (2012). For Buchanan in a Scottish context, see Coira in this volume, 110.

[15] Hadfield (2004) 43–58.

[16] Munday (1605) sig. B3v.

[17] On Lear and the union controversy, see O'Connor (2016); Schwyzer (2006).

[18] Schwyzer (2006); Patterson (1991) 73.

[19] Song 5, lines 67–8, 77–8.

[20] Drayton (1933) viii.

[21] See Helgerson (1992).

[22] See Gruffydd (1990) 22.

[23] Camden (1610) 417.

[24] Shakespeare (1982) 2.3.9, 5.1.17, 5.1.28.

[25] Randolph (1651) 21.

[26] Buchanan (1690) 5.

[27] Schwyzer (2004) 13–31.

[28] Rastell (1529) 206.

[29] Quiller-Couch (1921) 26. Dunbar's authorship of the poem has been questioned by recent editors, but see Mapstone (2001).

[30] D.R. Woolf (2003) 329–30.

[31] Webster (1624) sig. B1^{r}.

[32] Heywood (1637) sigs. B1$^{r–v}$.

[33] Levy (1967) 211; see Robinson (2011) 223.

[34] Mills (2000) 88–9.

[35] Williams (1977) 122.

[36] See Trevisan (2014); Hill (2011); Bergeron (1971) 123–241; Lobanov-Rostovsky (1993).

[37] Robinson (2011) 221.

[38] See Hill (2004); James (1997).

[39] Turner (2007) 59.

[40] Dekker (1628) sig. A3^{v}.

[41] Dekker (1608) sigs. F3^{v}–F4^{r}.

[42] Chester (1611) 78.

[43] Hayman (1628) 10.

[44] Spenser (1977) 3.3.42, 3.3.48. Cf. Dafydd Nanmor (1923) 35–6: '*Pen aeth dan, peunoeth i tyn, / Oll o aylwyd Llywelyn, / O Fôn i cad gwreichionen. … '* See Schwyzer (2004) 13–48.

[45] *Trojan Horse* (1646) 20. The attribution to Parker is uncertain.

[46] *Troy-Novant Must Not be Burnt* (1648).

6

Greek Gaels, British Gaels

Classical Allusion in Early-Modern Scottish Gaelic Poetry

M. Pía Coira

It may be argued that the cultural mindset of late-medieval and early-modern Gaelic Scotland boasted two separate sets of ‘Classics’, and that such was the case for Ireland, the two countries sharing a similar and intertwined literary and historical culture. On the one hand, the extant literary record, in its various forms, relies heavily on allusions to figures and events of the ancient and purely Celtic past; the writing itself is overwhelmingly in the language variety that modern Celticists, with good reason, term ‘Classical Gaelic’. On the other hand, the same record has a distinct, cherished place for the ‘Classics’ as this term is generally understood: the authors of the ancient Graeco-Roman world, and their works.

While the emphasis of the record is unequivocally on the ‘Celtic Classics’, and chiefly on the Gaelic Classics, the two sets coexist comfortably in Gaelic literary tradition. This chapter explores the deployment of Greek and Latin allusion in the poetry of early-modern Gaelic Scotland, with applicable reference to medieval material; it notes the role of Ireland in the transmission of Classical literature to Gaelic Scotland, and relevant Irish involvement in the seventeenth-century Scottish literary scene; it examines the Scottish Gaelic understanding of Britishness, and argues for the birth of a sense of Gaelic Britishness in the

same century; and it closes with an afterword on eighteenth-century developments, which included the poetic recruitment of new Graeco-Roman figures as allies in the struggle for a phoenix-like rebirth of Britain.[1]

The Poets and the Poetry

The extant seventeenth-century poetic corpus is made up of a variety of genres, forms, and styles, the work of different poet-classes. One poet-class was that of the *file* (plural *filidh*), a professional trained in a Scottish or Irish school, or in several of them, with a view to employment as official poet to a noble family. His poetry (*filidheacht*), commonly known as 'bardic poetry', is typically in syllabic rather than accentual (stress-based) metres, although a few exceptions do exist. The *file* was the court-poet, and his poetry was composed in Classical Gaelic, an artificial, fixed, high-register language form, found also in Ireland and dating to the later twelfth century.[2] Other poets composed in the everyday spoken language, or vernacular Gaelic—for which reason they are known as vernacular poets—and using accentual metres. There were also those known as 'amateurs', members of the aristocracy who might engage in poetic composition, often in less-than-perfect syllabic metres and in what has been generally regarded as a similarly imperfect imitation of Classical Gaelic.[3] Finally, a great part of the surviving vernacular verse is the work of lower orders of society; this is commonly designated folk-song.

Much of Gaelic poetry was composed to be sung: from the elegant and sophisticated panegyrics of the *filidh* (possibly chanted, not by the composers but by their reciters), through the vernacular praise and political poems, usually set to well-known contemporary tunes, down to the lullabies, love-, and work-songs of the working classes. Panegyric, whether eulogy or elegy, by *filidh* or otherwise, was composed for public performance because it had a key social function: to maintain the status quo, to ensure the cohesion of society. Typically this applied to the locality, to the clan; but poets also engaged with matters affecting Scotland or Britain as a whole. The second half of the seventeenth century is rich in verse of the latter kind, the extant corpus suggesting that, in matters of nationwide import, it was principally the vernacular poets who

raised their voices, their compositions serving as vehicles of propaganda relating to contemporary social and political issues.[4]

Two features of Scottish Gaelic poetry, held in common with the poetry of Ireland, are of particular relevance in the consideration of interaction with the Classics in the notion of Britishness: it was conceived within an aristocratic-warrior-society mindset, and it was formulated within a pan-Gaelic context or field of literary reference. The first feature helps us understand the particular aspects of Classical literature favoured by the poets (specifically in the matter of allusion); the second might appear to rule out the presence of Britishness in the poetry, but it was in fact a literary-reference field not unsusceptible of adaptation and manipulation, even to the point of portraying the Gaels as the champions of the true British cause.

Praise of the hero, the aristocratic warrior, through established conceits is the main poetic topic. It is not only the staple of formal court panegyric, but permeates all forms of literary creation, many of its themes and motifs recurring in all poetic genres, exploited by authors across the social board. The second feature, the pan-Gaelic field of literary reference, encompasses historical and pseudo-historical lore, genealogy, mythology, and ancient tales of Scotland, Ireland, and the Isle of Man; all of it, with the characters and story-lines, would have been familiar material to the audience.[5] Allusions to characters and events from this literary framework were essential, in particular, in panegyric. Genealogy, inextricable from history, took the origins of the Gaels back to a branch of the ancient Scythians who had, the origin legend went, migrated, through Egypt and Spain, to Ireland, a number of them subsequently settling in Scotland. Late-medieval poetic allusions, however, are consistently to the Gaels as descendants of Greeks, rather than of Scythians, a stance rationalized in the official version of the history of the Gaels.[6] Despite its pan-Gaelic outlook, the poetry was not closed to external influence. Down to the end of the seventeenth century, Greek and Latin, Arthurian, and continental-tale references are relatively frequent, particularly in the work of the *filidh*; additionally, Lowland-Scottish and continental influences are detected in some poetic themes, imagery, and allusions.[7] These two features—the aristocratic-warrior ambience and the pan-Gaelic field of literary reference—being common to the poetry of both Scotland and Ireland, unsurprisingly the poetic

production of the one country is very similar to that of the other. In some respects, nevertheless, there are differences between the two.[8]

A further feature of Gaelic poetry worth mentioning is its conservatism, inevitably connected with the two previous features discussed, and perhaps a result of them.[9] All three features are closely related to the public character of the poetry and to its crucial social function. Yet, as noted, this Irish–Scottish literary world was not impervious to external influence and, more to the point, the Greek and Latin Classics had a firm, secure place in it from very early times.

Classical Reception

Filidheacht, the particular type of versification used by the *filidh* which so heavily influenced other forms of Gaelic poetry, was a form of literature that Scotland received from Ireland. With Ireland, then, we begin in our consideration of Classical reception in Gaelic literature.

Latin arrived in Ireland hand-in-hand with Christianity in the fifth century AD. In the Irish monasteries scholarship was not limited to the study of the Bible and the Church Fathers, but included Latin rhetoric and grammar. Engagement with Latin learning came to influence native culture itself in various ways, while Latin became the language of communication outwith the Gaelic-speaking areas.[10] In the central Middle Ages there was a new development in the reception of Greek and Latin Classics in Ireland, where scholars began to translate, and creatively adapt, epics and legend from Graeco-Roman antiquity. This might involve altering style, structure, or content, the aim being to bring the stories into the literary context familiar to their audience, that of their own stock of Ireland-set narratives. But the translations also reveal the cultural self-confidence of their authors: through a cross-cultural comparison technique they presented the heroes of the legendary Irish past as a match to those of Graeco-Roman antiquity, but in a way that did not precisely leave the former as inferior to the latter. As we will see, this same technique can also be found in Classical Gaelic poetry of Scotland composed several centuries later.

It was almost certainly this translation movement that paved the way for the inclusion of Greek and Latin allusions in the poetry.[11] As in the case of Gaelic allusions, the poems' audiences would have been familiar with the stories, a familiarity no doubt facilitated by the translations; adding this foreign matter to the poetic stock-in-trade appears as the next natural step, and so we find both sets of Classics (Gaelic and Graeco-Roman) co-existing comfortably in the extant poetic production. Whether as brief references or in the form of sometimes rather extended apologues, Greek and Latin allusions are relatively frequent in Classical Gaelic poetry. Yet we cannot assume that it was solely these translations that inspired the poets to add the Graeco-Roman world to the resources of their trade. For something crucial happened in the later twelfth century, something often termed a 'poetic revolution': poetry ceased to emanate from the monasteries, and the *filidh* reorganized themselves into hereditary poetic families under secular patronage, and ran their own poetic schools. This new arrangement has long been believed to result from two contemporary developments in Ireland: the Anglo-Norman arrival and Church reform. It was also at this time that Classical Gaelic emerged, to remain, virtually unchanged, the language form of the educated élites until the demise of traditional Gaelic society; and we further see the emergence of the distinctive genre of Classical Gaelic panegyric.[12] Many pre-twelfth-century poetic conceits were preserved in the new dispensation, but there are changes in this respect too, one of them being the novel use of Greek and Latin allusions.[13]

There may be a direct connection between the translation literary movement, the major twelfth-century developments affecting both poets and poetry, and the fresh taste for Classical allusions. Yet the matter may not be so straightforward. Irish scholars' contact with the continent from the seventh century onwards is well attested, seemingly fading away after the tenth century. More recently it has been argued, especially by Michelle O Riordan, that contact and exchange continued after that date, resulting in twelfth-century developments in the continental, Latin-learning-based schools themselves being mirrored in Gaelic poetry of the later-medieval period. In methodology and techniques, as in the range of literary tropes and figures, a shared aesthetic of the *artes versificandi/artes poetriae* seems to have existed, the educated and literary Irish keeping up with, if not abreast of, the trends of their counterparts in Britain and on the

continent.[14] This represents fresh light on Classical reception in Ireland, where in effect Anglo-Norman settlement, rather than having a culturally negative impact, helped to enrich native literature and possibly favoured the emergence of the distinctive Classical Gaelic panegyric.[15] For Gaelic Scotland, similarly, twelfth- and thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman influx —which had none of the violence that accompanied it in Ireland—may well have been perceived as culturally enriching.[16]

Whatever the case, Scottish court poetry certainly adjusts to the model brought by the Irish 'poetic revolution'. This includes the deployment of Classical allusions, extended, as will be shown, to a consideration of Britishness within the Gaelic historical environment and of the Gaels themselves as members of the British kingdom. As a final note, however, we cannot assume that Classical reception in Gaelic Scotland, as revealed in its literature, was simply 'inherited' from the poetic schools of Ireland. It might seem reasonable to do so, on account of the conservatism of those guardians of learning, the *filidh*, and the shared cultural inheritance of both countries; yet, because external influence is otherwise detectable in the extant body of Scottish Gaelic literature, we cannot dismiss the possibility of at least some degree of Classical transmission from the Lowlands and beyond. But this is an area yet to be researched.

Modern Scholarship

A dedicated study on the influence of Latin learning on Scottish Gaelic poetry is a project for another time and place. All the same, even at a quick glance we find a suggestion that O Riordan's thesis of continuing cultural exchange is equally valid for Scotland.[17] Scholarship has, instead, given much attention to rhetorical devices, beginning with the publication by John MacInnes in 1978 of an important study surveying what he termed the 'panegyric code'.[18] By this term, now well established, he denoted the choice of lexis and imagery, particularly in panegyric and in relation to the social function of Gaelic poetry. Subsequently, scholars have explored the use of metonymy, landscape description, kingship imagery, legal terminology, the term *Gall* ('non-Gael, foreigner'), the established view of one single Irish–Scottish literary culture, and the panegyric code in its

Irish and Scottish forms.[19] All these studies were carried out from a ‘Gaelico-centric’, so to speak, point of view. None explicitly adverts to the fact that the tropes and topoi of Gaelic panegyric coincide, to a remarkable degree, with those found in medieval poetry generally, as prescribed by the British and continental schools.[20]

In what follows the focus is on the Classical Greek and Latin allusions found in Gaelic poetry of Scotland, and on how they interacted with the Gaelic understanding of Britishness, principally in the later seventeenth century, but with relevant reference to the medieval inheritance and with an afterword on important eighteenth-century developments. It is noteworthy that until the end of the seventeenth century such allusions are only used by the *filidh* (and their colleagues, the professional historians) and the ‘amateur’ poets. None are to be found in vernacular poetry (bar the occasional reference to the purportedly Greek origin of the Gaels), if we except a couple of instances bridging the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The suggestion is that only the educated, literate classes felt confident to handle Classical allusions, or were at all knowledgeable of the Classics. Secondly, again until the close of the seventeenth century, allusions are chiefly to ancient Greek and Latin heroes and their martial deeds—unsurprisingly since our poetry is the product of, and revolves around, an aristocratic-warrior society. There is, nonetheless, the occasional reference to a Greek philosopher, a Roman poet, or a Roman goddess.

As a caveat, an accurate assessment of Classical allusions is not possible due to various forms of imbalance in the extant poetic corpus. For example, in panegyric Classical allusions appear only in poems for MacDonald and Campbell subjects—but does this have any significance? For it is also the case that the surviving corpus is chiefly comprised of panegyric for these two families, others not being so well represented. Further, some poems for Scottish patrons are of Irish authorship, and some of Scottish authorship are for Irish patrons, making the clear delineation of ‘Scottish’ and ‘Irish’ a point for debate.[21]

The Allusions: Warriors, Philosophers, and the War of the Sexes

There are no Classical allusions at all in the (rather meagre) body of pre-sixteenth-century Scottish Gaelic panegyric. And quite extraordinarily perhaps, the vast majority of allusions we do have come from poems composed for members of the Campbell family, only three instances gracing MacDonald verse. Of the latter, one appears in a eulogy for Sorley Boy (Somhairle Buidhe, d. 1590), chief of the Islay and Antrim branch of the clan. The author, the Irish poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn, depicts his subject as a debt which Scotland owes to Ireland, where he should return. He incorporates an apologue from Classical tradition aimed to serve as a historical precedent to add weight to his case: Caesar's vision of Rome as a woman in distress, entreating him to return from Spain to save her from barbarian threat.[22] As retold by Tadhg Dall, the story diverges from other extant versions, where the anecdote of Caesar's vision is not set in Spain: thus Lucan's *Pharsalia* gives it in the account of the Passing of the Rubicon.[23] Whatever the poet's reasons for this particular tweak, his straying from the original is hardly a concern. It is probably best understood in the light of the translation/adaptation techniques employed by Irish scholars of the central Middle Ages, and is not the only instance of its kind. The apologue, in any case, was never itself the purpose in a poem, but rather a literary tool.[24]

The second MacDonald poem containing a Classical allusion is an anonymous address to James of Islay (d. 1626), with just one brief reference to the Greek origins of the Gaels,[25] and the last a eulogy for Donald of Clanranald (d. 1618), by Cathal MacMhuirich (Mac Muireadhaigh, *fl*. 1600–50), of the hereditary poets to the MacDonalds. Cathal focuses on the subject's martial skills, and the Classical reference is, appropriately, to the heroes of a story of enduring popularity among both Irish and Scottish Gaels, the fifth-century *De Excidio Troiae Historia*:[26]

> *Laoich dár conchlann táin na Traoí*
> *um Dhomhnall san bháirc a mbí*
>
> Warriors equal to the host of Troy surround Donald in his ship[27]

A simple, brief simile, then, placing Donald and his fighting men side by side with the Trojan heroes. Brief, evocative references (Classical or otherwise) are the most frequent type in Classical Gaelic verse, and of this type are most of the Classical allusions in Campbell panegyric, to which now we turn. The earliest extant Campbell verse dates from the sixteenth century, the record opening with an incitement to battle composed on the eve of the Battle of Flodden (1513). Addressed to Archibald (Gilleasbaig), second Earl of Argyll, who would lose his life on the battlefield, it twice alludes to the Greek origins of the Gaels. [*S*]*liocht Gaodhal ó Ghort Gréag* ('the race of the Gael from the land of Greece'), the poet advises, must follow Ireland's example and keep Scotland safe against English threat.[28] This depiction of the Gaels as taking on the fight for Alba (Scotland), without even a nod to the Lowland component of the army, is of interest; a similar depiction would be regularly used in the seventeenth century, when the cause was the fight for the rightful king of Britain.[29]

We find Greece again, as well as Hector of Troy, in a eulogy for another Earl of Argyll, perhaps the fourth, Red Archibald (Gilleasbaig Ruadh, d. 1558).[30] In a passage describing the subject's armour and weapons the anonymous author claims the golden collar of the earl's mail coat to be of Greek craftsmanship, and his breastplate that of Hector.[31] Similar brief references to famous figures from the Classics occur in a poem probably composed in the early 1640s. Its subject is the eighth Earl of Argyll, another Archibald, and the author possibly Niall MacEwen (Mac Eóghain), of the family of hereditary poets to the Campbells. No fewer than four different allusions are given in a couple of rather packed quatrains: Argyll is 'the Hector of the land of Scotland', 'the Pompey of the plain of Duibhne's race', 'as Cato', 'like Caesar'.[32]

But this poem also contains a different type of allusion where the poet celebrates his subject as having the learning of Aristotle. It shares a quatrain with a reference to an ancient Gaelic hero, Conall Cearnach, while elsewhere in the poem Argyll is compared to yet another Gaelic champion of the past, Cú Chulainn.[33] The assortment of Celtic and Classical references is not unique to this poem: a similar easy coexistence of both sets of allusions is found in other poems mentioned above, including those for MacDonald subjects, and is common in Irish Gaelic poetry of our period.

Finally, there are allusions to Hector and Jason in *Mó iná ainm Iarrla Gaoidheal* (‘Greater than his title is the Earl of the Gaels’, §§30, 31), for the same eighth Earl of Argyll. The anonymous author also compares Archibald to Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great (Alasdair Uaibhreach, ‘Alexander the Proud’, in Gaelic tradition), relating next how the latter had come to envy his father and eventually written him a letter demanding the kingship.[34] It is well known that bad relations came to exist between Philip and Alexander, but this particular anecdote is not traceable to Classical sources; it may be yet another instance of Gaelic adaptation of a Classical story, or perhaps a borrowing from an Alexander romance.[35] The poet then clarifies that although ‘Tú Filib fola Duibhne’ (‘You are the Philip of Duibhne’s blood’), part of the story does not apply: unlike Philip, he is not at all to fear the envy of his own son. He has more to say: Argyll in fact surpasses Philip, as his son does Alexander, because, unlike the two Greeks, they are Christians. Here the poet reproduces the technique already employed by Irish literati some five centuries earlier: the cultural juxtaposition placing Celts and Classics side by side, but revealing the formers’ own cultural self-confidence.[36]

Classical references in the *filidh*’s poetry, then, primarily involve great heroes of the past (kings and military or political leaders), aptly so given the poetry’s principal concern with the aristocratic warrior. Neither is the reference to Aristotle out of place, the subject’s learning being also a panegyric-code motif.[37] Yet the *filidh*’s knowledge of the Classics, and its deployment in their trade, was not limited to great warriors and sages. When in 1603 James VI of Scotland obtained the crown of England, the Irish poet Eochaidh O’Hussey (Ó hEódhusa) dedicated to him a panegyric which probably reflected the Irish nobility’s optimism at such a development.[38] After particularly trying times under the later Tudors, the Irish welcomed their dying out and the prospect of a new, Scottish dynasty. In *Mór theasda dh’obair Óivid* (‘Much is wanting from Ovid’s work’) O’Hussey claims that there is a great absence in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*: the prodigious change about to take place as a result of the new status quo, a change which, were he still alive, Ovid would certainly add to his work.[39] The change anticipated by the poet embraces not only his own country but all of the ‘three mischievous sisters’—England, Scotland, and

Ireland—who will now finally live in peace with one another (§§7–8). Then at §9 he states:

> *Atá Seireis—as sé a shuim—*
> *ag treabhadh thulach ndíoghuinn,*
> *ag buain fhala d'arm Marsa:*
> *marbh an fhala ón obar-sa.*
>
> In sum, Ceres ploughs fruitful hillocks, wiping blood off the sword of Mars; enmity is dead as a result of this activity.

This is, of course, the pathetic fallacy, which in the Gaelic panegyric code includes the portrayal of the land as lush and fertile under the right king. Ó hEódhusa's innovation is to give it a Classical twist by not only invoking Ceres but depicting her performing a gesture (the wiping of the blood on Mars's sword) which leaves the audience in no doubt: war is over.

But the poet is not quite done with the Classics. Having portrayed the utopian conditions—particularly Ireland's—heralded by James's accession, he then embarks on the description of an argument between Nature and Fortune, each claiming to be the one who has put James where he is and made his achievements possible. For the poet the matter is clear, and so Nature wins the debate: James's achievements stem from his personal qualities (§§22–32). This statement again links with the Gaelic panegyric code, here with the conceit that presents the right king as possessing the qualities necessary for the office. Ó hEódhusa's wide-ranging use of Classical allusions and his avoidance of Gaelic ones is not difficult to explain: clearly he was aware of James's taste for the Classics and distaste for the Gaels, the latter particularly manifest in his treatment of the Scottish Highlanders and Islanders.[40]

So far the Graeco-Roman allusions in formal praise poetry. But they also appear in other genres. In Ossianic ballad, for instance, the 'king of Greece' is among the foreign leaders launching an invasion on Ireland, and his daughter, reputedly the best female warrior ever, among the combatants.[41] Looking at a different genre, in a humorous piece in the Book of the Dean of Lismore Niall Mór MacMhuirich (*c*.1550–*c*.1630) pokes fun at a young philanderer. He is not, the poet taunts the youth, quite the match of any great figure of the past to whom some well-known,

enduring love story was deservedly attached. He then gives a list of these figures, mostly from Gaelic tradition, but including ‘the son of the king of Greece’ and Hector of Troy.[42]

This leads us directly to love poetry itself, which in European *amour-courtois* style flourished in Gaelic Scotland and Ireland between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries—with some quirks of its own. Thus when dealing with the pains of love there is often an element of irony, as in the poet’s sensible resolution that if love is a sickness, he would rather give it up and preserve his health.[43] The Classics made but little inroad into this genre, and where we do find them they are not at all connected with love-gods or goddesses: here we are once again back to Greeks and Trojans, and even to the Byzantine Emperor Basiliscus, merely because they suit the poet’s argument or line of thinking.[44]

For the Classical figures we commonly associate with love we must turn to poets other than the *filidh*. There seems to be only a couple of Scottish instances, given in this section with caution as they might date to the late-seventeenth century or the early-eighteenth; they are, either way, pioneering instances of the new style of love poetry that emerged in the later eighteenth century.[45] In *Thugas gaol nach fàillineach* (‘I have given unfailing love’) a MacLean poet, Anndra mac an Easbaig (Andrew son of the Bishop, *fl*. *c*.1635–1720), compares the lady’s beauties to Diana’s.[46] In *Thugas ceist da mhnai ghast* (‘I gave my affection to a beautiful woman’), Angus (Aonghas Odhar) MacDonald (*fl*. 1698–1712), a brother of the better-known Sìleas na Ceapaich, begins by praising his beloved’s physical attributes: she is like Venus, Diana’s beauty is but a third of hers (§§4, 5).[47] Revealing a wide acquaintance with the Classics, he refers to Philoctetes, apparently in a comparison of the poet’s love-wound to the terrible physical wound suffered by that Greek warrior.[48] Soon we learn the cause of Angus’s suffering: he has been abandoned by his lover. Wounded but wiser now, he closes with a thought for, and a warning to, any other man who may fall victim to the lady’s charms: ‘*’S mairg fer eile a bheir gragh dhui[t] am dheadh*’ (‘Alas any other man who after me loves you’, §11).

Still on the theme of women, but rather within the category of misogynistic verse, an earlier piece in the Book of the Dean of Lismore—its author known only as ‘The Parson’—gives a list of famous figures

destroyed by female fickleness and deceit. Once again, the names of heroes from Gaelic tradition sit side by side with others from the Classics (Hercules and Aristotle), as well as Solomon.[49] Not that such and so many alarming precedents deter the speaker: he closes by noting that someone he knows has been the happy receiver of sweet love without the calamities suffered by others—so why should he not give it a chance?

The Gaels and the Kingdom of Britain

Scottish Gaelic literature also engages with the Classics on an altogether different matter: the question of Britishness. It could hardly fail to address this subject, as the Gaels had for centuries been deeply involved with the island of Britain and its politics. Having begun to settle in northern Britain in pre-historical times, they had first conquered the larger part of it, before coming under the authority of the Stewart[50] Anglo-Norman kings of Scotland and Britain, and later the foreign houses of Orange and Hanover. In addition, some Highland kindreds ('kindred' being a Scots term for 'a family, race, or stock') were of British or Norman origin. Over the centuries there would have been among the Scottish Gaels a need for consideration of what these changes meant for them with regard to their own sense of identity and vis-à-vis the other peoples of Britain. And given the supreme importance attached by the Gaels to origins, reflected in the carefully preserved genealogical record as well as in chronicle and poetry, and the well-attested Gaelic cultural self-confidence in the medieval and early-modern periods, one would expect such changes to be of a challenging nature for the Gaels—and yet they were not. Rather, they were absorbed, integrated, and, again in self-confident style, used to portray the Gaels as members of the kingdom of Britain, key players in its history, and the defenders of right and justice in the island. It was but a direct transfer from the previous status quo: before Union the Scottish Gaels had perceived themselves as *Albanaigh* (Scots); thereafter their loyalty remained with the wider British kingdom of which they had become a part, and with the line of its kings they deemed the legitimate one.[51]

Scottish Gaelic literary engagement with the question of Britain, the Britons, and Britishness has two separate strands, the first engaging with the old notion of British ethnicity derived from Troy, and the second

emerging in the wake of the Union of Crowns in 1603. Writing in the early-seventeenth century, Cathal MacMhuirich gives the genealogy of Brutus, the reputed ancestor of the British, among whom he includes the Campbells 'and the whole race of Arthur son of Uther' (that is, the legendary King Arthur). He then continues:

> It is that Brutus that used to be called Brutus the Repugnant, and the reason he was so called is that his mother died in bearing him and that he killed his own father with an arrowshot so that he could have the kingdom after him.

Subsequently, Cathal informs us, Brutus was banished by his own brother to Britain, and thus 'the British are named after him'.[52]

Our poet was merely repeating information first found, in Gaelic sources, in the eleventh-century *Lebor Bretnach* ('History of the Britons').[53] Possibly composed in Scotland,[54] this is largely a translation of *Historia Brittonum*, ascribed to the ninth-century Welsh monk Nennius. The detail of Brutus's murder of his father, incidentally, was not part of the original story, which speaks rather of a hunting accident.[55] Dating also to the eleventh century is a historical poem, apparently of Irish authorship, which names Albanus, brother of Brutus, as leading the first invasion of Scotland.[56] The story accounted for Scotland's name, *Alba* in Gaelic, though conveniently ignoring the fact that until the ninth century *Alba* meant the whole island of Britain.[57] And, perhaps importantly at the time, through the reference to Albanus it linked the origins of Scotland, then a Gaelic kingdom, to the Trojan legend.

This remained for a few centuries the accepted, official version of early Scottish history, among both Highland and Lowland writers, with just some small variation in detail. John of Fordun (*fl*. *c*.1360–*c*.1384), for instance, gives Albanactus for Albanus, and makes him a son, rather than a brother, of Brutus, as does Geoffrey of Monmouth.[58] But at least by the early-sixteenth century, some Scottish historians, like John Major (1467–1550), were casting doubt on the story.[59] The death blow—or such would its giver deem it to be—to the Trojan origin legend would come from George Buchanan (1506–82), a humanist scholar, historian, and senior tutor to James VI. He lunges against the creators of such a 'most impudent falsehood', which he crushes on historical and linguistic grounds, anachronism, ignorance, implausibility, and impossibility; 'their Brutus',

‘a parricide’, ‘never existed’.[60] His diatribe then focuses on the writers of Scottish history, who have ‘adopted ancestors, not indeed from Trojan refugees, but from the Grecian heroes who overturned Troy’, a reference to the origin legend of the Gaels (*Scoti* in Latin). This story he demolishes on linguistic and geographical grounds, lack of place-name evidence, and implausibility.[61] For his arguments against both origin stories he brandishes his trump card: no evidence for them is to be found in any of the ancient Greek and Latin writers.[62] Indeed Buchanan argued, as elsewhere in Britain did Camden, Selden, and others, solely from the evidence of the Classics; though himself a Gaelic-speaking Highlander, his Paris education had filled him with unquestioning respect for them, and he gave no credibility to the Gaelic historical records.[63]

To return to Albanus, despite his presence in our eleventh-century poem he never became a feature of Gaelic verse. As the accepted eponym of Scotland, he was preserved in historical material, but he failed to form part of the poetic stock—despite the Trojan connection he readily offered—almost certainly because he was, genealogically, an alien. Lineage was crucial in Gaelic poetry where, instead, references are consistently to great Gaelic ancestors and to the more remote ones, the Greeks. The Trojan connection, as far as we can tell from the extant poetic record, remained confined to simile and metaphor chiefly concerning Hector.

What does feature in the work of the poets, and this constitutes the first of the two strands of literary engagement with Britain, is the reference to the Campbells’ British origins. But oddly perhaps, Cathal MacMhuirich’s explicit mention of Campbell descent from Brutus is rarely replicated in the surviving poetry.[64] Instead, the illustrious ancestor of choice is regularly the legendary Arthur, King of Britain, with whom a certain Artúr in the pedigrees was identified.[65] This identification was accepted by the *filidh* with characteristic full confidence in their own genealogical records, the same confidence that led them to pass over in silence Campbell claims of Gaelic ancestry. The insertion of the Fenian-tales hero Diarmaid into the Campbell pedigree did not fool the *filidh*, who ignored this version of family history.[66] The poetic record celebrates the Campbells both as Britons (through descent from Arthur) and as Gaels (by assimilation, as it were). An Irish poet, in a happy burst of inspiration, referred to one of the earls of Argyll as *Breat-Ghaoidheal* (‘Brit-Gael’).[67]

The second strand of Gaelic literary engagement with Britishness is altogether unconnected with any sense of ethnicity; it is akin to Humphrey Llwyd's understanding of 'Briton' as a member of a united realm noted by Schwyzer.[68] It emerged in the wake of the coronation of James VI of Scotland as James I of England in 1603 and his assumption of the title King of Great Britain in 1604.[69] Strongest in the political poetry from mid-century onwards, it assumes the form of the Gaels as members of the kingdom of Britain and supporters of its king—the right king, that is, meaning one from the House of Stewart. Encapsulated in the term *rìoghalachd* ('royalism'), it portrays the defence of the Stewart kings as a fundamentally Gaelic affair. The earliest extant instance is perhaps a 1644 vernacular poem of welcome to the Earl of Antrim on his arrival in Scotland with support for Charles I in his time of need, during the course of the first English Civil War (1642–6). The king's enemies are identified as the English, an identification that appears again and again right through to the 1745 Rising.[70] From vernacular poets, indeed, comes most of the extant evidence, although occasionally similar political comment appears in the work of the *filidh*.[71] Witness comes also from historical records: Niall MacMhuirich, writing in the early-eighteenth century, explains that the reason for composing his chronicle was to record the support of the Crown by the Gaels, 'an mhuinntir do rinne an tseirbhis uile' ('the men who did all the service').[72]

In the nature of the arguments in support of the Stewart cause—no different from those used by writers elsewhere in Britain—as in the choice of particular terminology, we notice the development of a distinctive Jacobite rhetoric of royalism.[73] Divine right, right by heredity, and prophecy are some of the strongest contentions, but there is also room for recalling precedents, including Classical ones.[74] Thus Duncan MacRae (Donnchadh nam Pìos) has William of Orange and his wife Mary as 'sliochd Néro' ('Nero's race'), a reference to that Roman emperor's proverbial cruelty, while Aesop's fable 'a dog drops the meat for the reflection' is used more than once as a warning against political and personal greed.[75] A motif of Classical origin that becomes pervasive in political poetry is that of the wheel of Fortune. The various troubles of the Stewarts through the seventeenth century are often rationalized as divine punishment for sin, but not portrayed as a permanent disaster: the wheel

will turn again and restore social order, with the rightful king on the throne which is his inheritance.[76]

We can at this point summarize the impact of the Classics, as reflected in extant poetic allusions, down to the end of the seventeenth century. Holding a place within the pan-Gaelic field of literary reference, the allusions, overall, are not particularly plentiful, but they do suggest a wide knowledge of the Classics. In panegyric verse they concern either the Greek origin of the Gaels or, appropriately in a warrior-society mindset, great heroes of the antique Graeco-Roman world. They are most frequent in the *filidh*'s praise poetry for Campbell patrons. On occasion, as in O'Hussey's panegyric for James VI and I, there is innovation and creativity: Ceres in all her splendour signals the defeat of warlike Mars, and Nature and Fortune each claim credit for James's achievements in the unification of the island of Britain, and the promise of a new era of peace and prosperity. Here the Classics are subtly manipulated to connect with time-honoured Gaelic panegyric-code motifs relating to the celebration and legitimization of the rightful king. Other poet-classes and poetic genres similarly may resort to Classical allusions, turned into weapons in poems of satire. The seventeenth century, right from the Union of Crowns, saw the birth of a Gaelic sense of Britishness. This is most prominent from around mid-century and the start of the troubled period involving politics, religion, and the disturbances caused by the accession of a foreigner (William of Orange) to the throne. Previous poetic engagement with Britishness had merely concerned Campbell genealogy; there is now a general shift as poets move away from ethnicity to membership of a united British kingdom. And here the Gaels are not just any members, but those who wholeheartedly assume the responsibility for the defence of the country's rightful king, a Stewart king. There is room for Classical allusions here too, whether as historical precedents or in the invocation of Fortune's turning of her wheel, restoring peace and order through the reinstatement of the true British king to the throne.

Afterword: Eighteenth-Century Developments

The Jacobite Rising of 1715, it has been said, 'brought to an end the kind of society in which poetry was brought forth in the courts of chieftains

who lived like kings'.[77] But social change had been in progress in the Highlands and Western Isles for about a century. Partly, this change was imposed (by the 1609 'Statutes of Iona' and especially through subsequent legislation); but it also began to take place from within, notably when, educated in the Lowlands or England by legal requirement, the Gaelic nobility began to acquire a taste for non-Gaelic custom. This led to cultural and economic developments which would transform the very fabric of society.[78] One consequence was that, deprived of patronage, the *filidh* were becoming extinct by the early-eighteenth century. Vernacular poetry, on the other hand, survived and remained vibrant, although social change had an impact on it too. Thus the threat to the Gaelic language itself prompted some poems in defence of the mother tongue: a MacLean author applauds Edward Lhuyd's scholarly work on the Celtic languages; Alexander MacDonald (Alasdair mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, *c*.1698–1770) puts Gaelic on a par with other languages, including Greek and Latin.[79] Simultaneously, new themes and new treatments of old themes began to appear which brought Gaelic poetry closer to that composed elsewhere. Despite innovation (including the incorporation of some Augustan elements), certain features were retained, notably much panegyric-code terminology and imagery, while sometimes traditional concepts and conceits were adapted and blended into the new poetic themes and treatments.[80]

In the matter of innovation it was mac Mhaighstir Alasdair who led the way, and his success is borne out by the profound influence he had on subsequent poets. Part of his originality was the composition of 'nature poetry'—a genre non-existent in the literate verse of the Classical Gaelic period—where the influence of contemporary Lowland poets can be traced.[81] More to our purposes is his incorporation of Classical allusions into his work, but new and very different ones. Now we find statements such as Gaelic poetry had never known before:

> *'S moch bhios Phèbus ag òradh*
> *Ceap nam mòr-chruach 's nam beann*
>
> Phoebus early turns yellow
> the cap of the mountain and peak[82]

Phoebus was not the only newcomer to Gaelic poetry. A eulogy features Ulysses and Penelope, an elegy brings in the Muses; to the Muses themselves mac Mhaighstir Alasdair addressed a poem asking each one for a particular grace.[83] New arrivals surprise us also in love poetry: Venus, Dido, Diana are all compared (often losing in the comparison) to the poet's beloved; Cupid is invoked. Yet much remains of the previous *amour-courtois* style, particularly in the form of description of the lady's beauty.[84] Moving to satire, the Classics continue to be noxious weapons, especially when attacking those whose poetic efforts are deemed less than passable: these had never stood on Parnassus, never tasted Helicon, never had Apollo's acquaintance—Pluto's disciples they were in fact, and did not belong to the poetic order, but rather to that of Bacchus, from the time they spent at the inn.[85] Similarly in this poetic onslaught by a poet refused hospitality:

> *Chan eil ceòlraidh 'm Parnasas*
> *Nach bi bagradh do chall,*
> *'S ma gheibh Neiptean air fairg' thu*
> *Nì e garbh i le stàirn*
> *'S cuiridh Bhulcan 'na theine*
> *Cop-gheal deireadh gach steall.*
>
> There's no muse in Parnassus
> That won't threaten to drown you,
> And if Neptune gets you at sea
> He'll make it stormy with roaring
> While Vulcan sets foam-white
> Fire to each waterspout's end.[86]

This is a rare instance of Neptune in inimical mood in this period. For Neptune features with some regularity in the eighteenth century, mainly in political poetry. Commonly named alongside Aeolus, the pair are portrayed as the benign double-force that will further the Jacobite cause: calm seas and propitious winds are foreseen that will speed up the return of the true heir to the British throne.[87]

Indeed the great theme of eighteenth-century Gaelic political poetry is the vision of the return of the rightful king of Britain from exile,

triumphant over his enemies, the usurpers of the British throne. Jacobite rhetoric at this time remains very similar to that of the previous century,[88] but Classical allusions are far more plentiful, and feature various newcomers.[89] On his birth in 1720, Prince Charles Edward was celebrated as the phoenix that would restore the status quo; but the Jacobites were finally defeated at Culloden in 1746, a reversal poetically blamed on Venus, who had taken the Trojan rather than the Greek side.[90] The Trojans, of course, are the English, and the Greeks the Gaels, consistent with their respective origin legends; consistent also with the continuing identification of the English as the enemies of the House of Stewart.[91] No matter that Stewart supporters were to be found throughout Britain, which the poetry also acknowledges: the seventeenth-century image of the Greek Gaels, the British Gaels, as principal protagonists in the fight for the true king, remains a part of the poetic stock-in-trade of the eighteenth century.

M. Pía Coira, *Greek Gaels, British Gaels: Classical Allusion in Early-Modern Scottish Gaelic Poetry* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0006

[1] I am grateful to the following, who assisted in various ways, from suggestions and advice on both Celts and Classics to the reading of an earlier draft of this chapter: William Gillies, Tom Harrison, Marta Lara, Colm Ó Baoill, Tere Pardo, Pippa Simpson, Guen Taietti, and the editors of the current volume; and especially to Edward Welch, who made this contribution possible.

[2] For the *filidh*, see, for instance, Knott (1922–6) vol. 22, xxxi–xlv; Breatnach (1983).

[3] More recently it has been proposed that this may well have been an established literary language variety in itself; see Gillies (2006–9) 85–6.

[4] For an example of political comment by a *file*, see below, 112 n.71. There may well have been other instances which have not survived. For Ireland, on the other hand, there is a wealth of political poetry survivals; see Ó Buachalla (1983); Caball (1998).

[5] Gillies (2013) 190.

[6] This is the eleventh-century *Lebor gabála Érenn* ('The Book of the Taking of Ireland'); see Macalister (1938–56) 153. Claims of Greek origins are in accordance with earlier versions of the history of the Gaels, rejected by eleventh- and twelfth-century Irish scholars; see Jaski (2003), especially at 15–16, 30, 44–5, 47.

[7] See Gillies (2013) 192, 196, 206, 209. Stylistic external influences are similarly noted for historical writing in Gillies (2006–9).

[8] See McLeod (2004); Coira (2012).

[9] Conservatism is not to be equated with inflexibility. For some aspects of innovation and adaptation, see Coira (2012) 326–30.

[10] See, for instance, Simms (1998) 239, 240; Murphy (1956) xiv–xv. For the cruciality of Christian Latin learning in the creation of the earliest Irish genealogies, see Ó Corráin (1998). For what follows, see O'Connor (2014) 3–18.

[11] Ó Caithnia (1984) 25.

[12] See, for instance, Mac Cana (1974); Ó Cuív (1980); also Simms (2007).

[13] The earliest extant instance seems to be an allusion to Troy (Mac Cionnaith (1938) 411, §13) in an Irish poem of the late-thirteenth or early-fourteenth century. Classical Gaelic poetry also contains a variety of other allusions, such as biblical, historical, or to continental tales. For the pre-Classical Gaelic period see Mac Cana (2004).

[14] Breatnach (1997) 64–96; Breatnach (2001); Breatnach (2013); O Riordan (2007) 8–13.

[15] O Riordan (2007) 13–15.

[16] Broun (1999) 140.

[17] For instance, the poems in Bergin (1970) 169; Watson (1937) 66; Watson (1923) 36; and NLS 72.2.2, fos. 8v, 10, 11r generally adjust to the patterns described by O Riordan. Additionally, Thomson (1968) 166–7 notes the influence of Latin medieval verse in the early-fifteenth-century '*Harlaw Brosnachadh*', which combines the alliterative technique with the rhetorical exercise of the alphabetical poem. See further Simms (1990) 612, 614 for other features traceable to the Classics, like the mustering of the host and the arming of the hero; for a Scottish prose instance, see MacBain and Kennedy (1894) vol. 2, 258–64.

[18] MacInnes (1976–8).

[19] See Ní Annracháin (2007); McLeod (2002a), (2002b), (2003), (2004); Dewar (2006a), (2006b); Coira (2008a), (2008b), (2011), (2012).

[20] Perhaps one of the most striking differences is the handling of landscape description; see McLeod (2003) and McLeod (2004) 142–7 for this feature in Classical Gaelic poetry, and compare Curtius (1953) 155–82.

[21] But as an instructive reminder, note the point in Simms (1987) 60 that patrons paid elevated sums for the poems; this would have a bearing on the poet's choice of style and content, giving us an indication of each particular patron's expectations.

[22] *Fada cóir Fhódla ar Albain* ('Long has Fódla had a claim upon Alba'), Knott (1922–6) vol. 1, 172, at §§19–31.

[23] Lucanus (1835) I, ll. 183–94; Ó Caithnia (1984) 125, where other differences in the story elsewhere are also noted; and Fulton in this volume, 62–3, for the *Pharsalia*'s entry into Irish literature.

[24] Ó Caithnia (1984) 25, 26.

[25] *Bi ad mhosgaladh, a mheic Aonghais* ('Awake, O son of Angus'), Bergin (1970) 161, at §32.

[26] Probably translated into Gaelic in the tenth century; see O'Connor (2014) 4, 13, and Fulton in this volume, 66–7.

[27] *Foraois éigeas Innse Gall* ('The Hebrides are a forest of learned men'), §9, Black (1976–8) 345.

[28] *Ar sliocht Gaodhal ó Ghort Gréag* (‘The race of the Gael from the land of Greece’), Watson (1937) 158; allusions to Greece at §§1, 11.

[29] See below, 111–12.

[30] *Maith an chairt ceannas na nGaoidheal* (‘The headship of the Gaels is a good charter’), Watson (1914–19) 217. For the suggestion that the subject of the poem might be the fourth Earl, see Coira (2012) 129.

[31] *Maith an chairt ceannas na nGaoidheal*, §§33, 35.

[32] *Rug eadrain ar iath nAlban* (‘He hath made an intervention on Scotland’s soil’), Watson (1931) 152, §§3–4. Duibhne: a remote ancestor of the Campbells, from whom the title Ó Duibhne of the chiefs of the main branch.

[33] *Rug eadrain ar iath nAlban*, §§5, 26.

[34] TCD 1362a, fo. 1, §§13–21. Italics in quotations from unedited material represent reconstructed text.

[35] The suggestion of an Alexander-romance provenance is Tom Harrison’s, in personal correspondence with the author (email dated 9 April 2018). While most of the *filidh*’s apologues can be traced to Classical sources, in some instances their origin remains unknown; see Ó Caithnia (1984) 25.

[36] *Mó iná ainm Iarrla Gaoidheal*, §§22–6. Also concerned with Alexander is *Ceathrar do bhí ar uaigh an fhir* (‘Four stood on the hero’s grave’), a Gaelic version of a Latin poem. The earliest extant instance, and the closest to the original, is in the Book of the Dean of Lismore; it survives also in later Scottish and Irish traditions; see Ó Macháin (1997) 7–17.

[37] Aristotle is not always so positively estimated by the *filidh*; in an Irish religious poem he is contemplated in a *sic transit gloria mundi* mood, while in another he is said to be damned; see Mhág Craith (1967) 57, at §10, and McKenna (1931) 75, at §16.

[38] Caball (1998) 88–9. Already before the Union of Crowns, when James’s accession to the English throne appeared highly likely, another Irish poet eulogized him in a composition that rationalizes James’s claim to the ‘*trí gcoróna*’ (‘three crowns’), those of England, Scotland, and Ireland; see McKenna (1939–40) 177.

[39] Breatnach (1977–9) 169, §2.

[40] For James’s taste for Latin, as well as Greek and French, writing, see, for instance, Ó Buachalla (1983) 87.

[41] For the prose tale, see O’Rahilly (1926) 1, ll. 16–18. For a version in a Fenian ballad in the Book of the Dean of Lismore, see M’Lauchlan (1862) 9.

[42] *Maith do chuid, a charbaid mhaoil* (‘You are well off, (Mister) Bare Cheek’), Quiggin (1937) 68, quotations at §§4, 7. See also Gillies (2013) 210.

[43] Flower (1947) 157. This genre is worlds apart from the love poetry of the pre-Classical period, for examples of which see Murphy (1956) 82–9.

[44] *An sgítheach tú, a mhacaoimh mná?* (‘Are you weary, young girl?’), O’Rahilly (1926) 95, at §7; *Aithreach damh mo dhíochoisge* (‘I regret my petulance’), O’Rahilly (1926) 81, at §5. The Classics may well have influenced Gaelic love poetry in other ways; see, for instance, Flower (1947) 158 for a quatrain that seems inspired by an often-emulated Horace original.

[45] Ó Baoill (1979) 249.

[46] Ó Baoill (1979) 79, at §2, and 250 for the reference.

[47] MacDonald (1776) 266, §§4, 5. For this poet, a son of Archibald (Gilleasbaig), fifteenth chief of Keppoch, see Ó Baoill (1972) xxxviii–xxxix.

[48] '*Philocleth cha choimas ri m run*' ('Philoctetes does not compare to my disposition'), §5.

[49] *Créad fá seachnainn-sa suirghe?* ('Why should I avoid courtship?'), Gillies (2008), at §§7, 9. For some comment on these allusions, see Gillies (2008) 235, 236.

[50] The Scottish spelling of 'Stuart' is used throughout this chapter.

[51] Coira (2012) 335–44.

[52] Quotations from Black (1976–8) 330. For the original Gaelic text, see Black (1973) 200.

[53] See Van Hamel (1932), at §9.

[54] See Clancy (2000).

[55] Clarke (2014) 86.

[56] *A éolcha Alban uile* ('O all ye learned ones of Alba'), Jackson (1957), at §2.

[57] Broun (1998) 7, 9; Herbert (2000) 69.

[58] '*Albanactus filius Bruti*', Skene (1871) 38; Galfredi (1844) II, §4.

[59] He rejects some details, including the belief that Brutus had given his name to Britain; see Major (1740) 2–4.

[60] Buchanan (1827), Book II, §§iv–x (quotations at §§iv, vii, viii, x).

[61] Buchanan (1827) §§11–12 (quotation at §11).

[62] Buchanan (1827) §§vi, x, xii.

[63] For Camden's and Selden's reliance on the Classics, see Schwyzer in this volume, 79–80, 86. For Buchanan's dismissal of Gaelic learning, see Buchanan (1827), Book II, §2, and p. xi for his attendance at the University of Paris. John Major did accept the version of Scottish descent from the Gaels of Ireland, but dismissed the claim of a Greek origin; see Major (1740) 50–2.

[64] For a rare instance, see *Triath na nGaoidheal Giolla-easbuig* ('Lord of the Gael is Giolla-easbuig'), Watson (1931) 143, at §§30–1.

[65] For the fluctuations in Campbell pedigrees, see Sellar (1973); Gillies (1987). Arthur had long had a place in Gaelic literature. *Aigidecht Artúir* ('The entertaining of Arthur') first appears in a twelfth-century Irish manuscript listing the learned tales that formed part of the curriculum of the poetic schools; see Mac Cana (1980) 107–8. The story may have been composed in Scotland; see Bannerman (1989) 144.

[66] See Gillies (1987). Campbell descent from Diarmaid does appear in the compositions of vernacular poets, who seem more easily influenced by novel claims. Late genealogical histories (for which see MacGregor (2002)), emerging in the mid-seventeenth century when professional learned orders were in decline, similarly stray and are generally influenced by Lowland historians; see Coira (2012) 103, n. 225.

[67] *Dual ollamh do thriall le toisg* ('It is fitting for a master-poet to travel on an embassy'), §31.

[68] Schwyzer in this volume, 83.

[69] For references to Britain from 1603 onwards, see McCaughey (1989) 102–3; Ní Suaird (1999) 128–9.

[70] *Fàilt' a Mharcuis a dh' Alba* ('Welcome, Marquis, to Scotland'), MacDonald and MacDonald (1911) 46. For the English as the enemy, see §2.

[71] *Dá chúis ag milleadh ar meanma* (‘Two matters destroy our spirit’), possibly by Niall MacMhuirich in 1719, MacBain and Kennedy (1894) vol. 2, 280.

[72] MacBain and Kennedy (1894) vol. 2, 202, where the text is a conflation of those in the Red and Black Books of Clanranald. An edition of the Books of Clanranald is in preparation by William Gillies.

[73] See Ní Suaird (1999) 93–140. For the similarity of arguments used by the Gaels and by writers elsewhere in Britain, see Coira (2012) 324.

[74] Prophecy is of particular interest. In Classical Gaelic verse the prophets cited belonged to the pan-Gaelic field of literary reference, and the prophecy concerned the subject’s destiny to become high-king; all this is now discarded and replaced with allusions to the prophecies of Merlin and Thomas the Rhymer concerning the [re]unification of Britain under one king; see Coira (2012) 319–20, 324.

[75] See Ní Suaird (1999) 110–11 (quotation at 110).

[76] For the borrowing of the theme of the wheel of Fortune from Greek and Latin pagan religion, see Campbell (1933) 3, n. 2.

[77] Black (2001) xi.

[78] See Dodgshon (1998).

[79] *Air teachd on Spáin, do shliochd an Gháoidhil ghlais* (‘When the descendants of Gaedheal Glas came from Spain’), Ó Baoill (1979) 100, at ll. 1194–201; *Gur h-i as crìoch àraid* (‘It is a special purpose’), MacDonald (1751) 4. For the debt of Gaelic studies to Lhuyd, see Campbell and Thomson (1963).

[80] Black (2001) xx; Black and Carruthers (2015) 55. An example of blending is the employment of new Classical allusions in love poems that otherwise very much read like those of the previous period; the earliest extant instance is *Thugas ceist da mhnai ghast* (see above, 107–8).

[81] Thomson (1989) 160–1. For mac Mhaighstir Alasdair’s innovation generally, see Black (2001) 425–7.

[82] *An dèis dhomh dùsgadh san mhaidean* (‘After I woke in the morning’), Thomson (1993) 22, ll. 193–4. For another allusion to Phoebus in a nature poem, see Black (2001) 340, at ll. 33, 129.

[83] *Aonghais Òig mhic Sheumais* (‘Young Angus son of James’), Ó Baoill (1994) 19, §5; *Gur lìonmhor trioblaid sìnte* (‘Many trials are attached’), Black (2001) 258, l. 62; *A Cheòlraidh mhòr tha ‘n tàmh gu h-àrd* (‘O great Muses residing high above’), MacDonald (1751) 7. For a similar development in Irish poetry, already in the work of Dáibhí Ó Bruadair (d. 1698), see for instance Mac Erlean (1910) 58, 141, 161; Dinneen (1900) 88, 148, 162. See further O’Higgins (2017).

[84] *‘S truagh gun mi sa’ choill* (‘Pity I was not in the wood’), MacDonald (1751) 11; *Feasgar Luain, a’s me air chuairt* (‘At eve on Monday, on a round’), Calder (1937) 58, ll. 39, 53, 79. See also the early poems *Thugas ceist da mhnai ghast* and *Thugas gaol nach fàillineach* (above, 107–8). For the archetypal description of the lady’s beauty, see Flower (1947) 156–7.

[85] *A Lachlainn, sguir do d’ bhàrdachd* (‘Lachlan, desist from your poetry’), Ó Baoill (1997) 114, at §§10–12.

[86] *Alastair mhòir Mhic an Tòisich* (‘Big Alexander Macintosh’), Black (2001) 318, ll. 27–32.

[87] *An naigheachd a fhuair sinn an dràsd’* (‘The tidings we now have received’), Campbell (1933) 2. See also Campbell (1933) 73 and 94.

[88] For a shift in focus, see Ní Suaird (1999) 93–4.

[89] For instance, Campbell (1933) 138, ll. 58–60 and 186, l. 29; Ó Baoill (1994) 28, l. 423. See further Stroh (2011) 105–7, 108–9.

[90] *An naigheachd a fhuair sinn an dràsd'*, l. 9; *O gur mise th' air mo chràdh* ('O I am in anguish'), Black (2001) 164, ll. 48, 117.

[91] See for instance Campbell (1933) 168, ll. 19, 71 and 236, l. 57.

7

Celts and Romans on Tour

Visions of Early Britain in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature

Mary-Ann Constantine

> You know that Second Sight is not the inheritance of this Country, but it had the power of presenting to my mind the Images of times past. The druidical remains which were before me, the very place where I then was in ancient Mona and in the deep recess of a large wood kindled in my mind a degree of fire, as necessary to the imagination of an Antiquary, as it was of Old in the compositions of Prometheus.[1]

Thus a curious traveller of 1776, visiting the sacred groves of Anglesey. The manuscript is anonymous, but he is almost certainly the historian William Warrington, who at the start of his tour declares himself, a trifle creepily, to be in hot pursuit of 'Antiquity, the elder sister of History, with whom I have been a long time enamoured'.[2] This vision is the climax of several lively pages on the Roman invasion of the island, and reaches its peroration in high style:

> To my raised Fancy there appeared a number of Druids, each seated under a venerable Oak, teaching the law and dispensing justice; another group of these sacred Ministers surrounded the smoaking Altar, and the trembling Victim, in all the pomp of dreadful Sacrifice … . but at the sight of human blood, the Vision ceased, the Charm was dissolved, and Reason again took her place, turning away abhorrent from the fancied spectacle. By

> the time I got into the boat, the druidical enchantment had entirely ceased, and left me with no other effect than a keen appetite for my dinner …[3]

The textual bias of what we would now call archaeology during this period has long been acknowledged. Artefacts, monuments, Roman roads, and camps were frequently interpreted through the prism of the Classical authors, and provided, by their very existence, corroboration of the authority of ancient writings.[4] The 'Promethean fire' of Warrington's druidic fantasy is thus the product of a kind of chemical reaction, replicated again and again in other writers, between text and place: when it comes into contact with the tangible vestiges of the past the internalized Classical text bursts into life. As most tourists learn to their cost, however, the bathetic realities of travel—ferries, landlords, weather, the next meal—make it hard to sustain such intensity for long.

'The description of Tours', our traveller tells us, 'has become of late, a considerable part of fashionable Amusement'.[5] Writing in the mid-1770s, he could not know quite how considerable that part would become. Michael Freeman's work reveals just how rapidly the practice of touring, and its associated writings, developed. His most recent tally of published and unpublished accounts of tours to Wales alone shows around seventy tours for the decade of 1770–9; by the 1790s this had more than doubled, and it would remain at around 120 per decade until the middle of the nineteenth century.[6] As a literary phenomenon, travel writing became immensely popular: new works were devoured by a reading public, and it was practised by professional and amateur writers alike. Charles Batten has described it as 'one of the most characteristic forms of the century', and it is remarkable how much it has since fallen out of sight, between the cracks of subsequent disciplinary blocks.[7] Its octopus habit of reaching out in multiple directions—natural history, geology, landscape aesthetics, anthropology, *belles lettres*, life-writing—gives the tour narrative, written at home or abroad, an uneasy status as 'not-quite-literature' which has often excluded it from sustained critical attention. Though the European Grand Tour evidently shaped perceptions of Classical literature for generations of young men, accounts of travels even in Classical lands find no place, for example, in the *Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature*.[8] Yet this is a lively, varied, and receptive genre which can tell us, among other things, a great deal about the consumption and

creation of the history of Britain. Above all, perhaps, the tendency of tour writing to mesh together a wide variety of subjects and registers allows modern readers to appreciate the fact that, then as now, responses to and understandings of history and prehistory are contingent on a wide variety of factors, from the deepest structures of gender and class to more evanescent things like weather or health. Tours also allow us to gauge how normalized certain strands of historical (and pseudohistorical) knowledge have become.

The principal focus of this chapter is on perceptions of Romans and Celts (the latter more usually defined in this period as Ancient Britons) in Wales, and on texts, like Warrington's, written in the last quarter of the eighteenth century when touring Wales was at its most fashionable. The compacted nature of tour writing means, however, that it is helpful to look back at predecessors. Tours are 'compacted' in the sense of being densely layered. Consciously or otherwise, writers frequently incorporate earlier descriptions of or knowledge about key sites; this also makes them inherently resistant to a univocal standpoint, and can introduce interesting ambiguities into their perceptions of the past. The Classical lens with which this chapter is primarily concerned provides, chronologically, the 'deepest' layer of textual mediation; in tours of Wales, the authors most frequently encountered are Caesar and Tacitus. But Anglesey, for example, already textually incarnate in Tacitus, was also visited and described in the twelfth century by Gerald of Wales (who has nothing at all to say about the Roman invasion, although he does have a good story about a dog with no tail); described by Leland in the fifteenth; and included by William Camden and his continuators in *Britannia*. Educated visitors with antiquarian inclinations would have known these, and some would also have read Henry Rowlands' *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (1723, with a revised edition in 1766), a work which takes the 'home tour' to its logical conclusion, by exploring intently, intensely, and with great imagination the deep history of a few square miles around the author's own home on the banks of the Menai Straits. Rowlands, a north-Walian counterpart to and contemporary of William Stukeley, begins his account of the island with an extraordinarily vivid evocation of the effect of the Flood on its geology and geography, and traces the fortunes of the primitive first settlers (descendants of Japhet, the father of Gomer, supposed progenitor of the Cymry or Welsh) up to the civilized period of druidic learning. Working

against the textual grain, he is clear from the outset of the need to venture beyond the safety of the Classical authors:

> A method (I confess) very unusual, to trace the Footsteps of Historical Actions any other way, than by that of Antient MEMOIRS and RECORDS. But where those Lights are wanting, what shall we do?[9]

To penetrate the darkness he turns to other types of evidence: artefacts, coins, ruins, and language itself, decoding the ritual landscape around him through the speculative etymological analysis of place-names, 'which afford here and there little strinkling Lights, to be cautiously and warily made use of'.[10] Like Stukeley at Stonehenge, Rowlands was neither cautious nor wary, loading his little locality with portentous meanings reaching back into the most distant period of human history and myth. Yet his determination to read the past through sites, names, and objects challenges the monopoly of the Classical texts, and marks an important phase in the perception of antiquity as inextricably tied to place.

Rowlands, who died in the year his book was first published, reputedly never travelled further than Conwy,[11] but another important writer was more adventurous. The Shropshire-born Welsh antiquarian Edward Lhuyd (1660–1709) explored all of the Celtic-speaking countries in the years around 1700, and these journeys led to his monumental *Archaeologia Britannica* (1707).[12] This volume, the first part of a projected series left unfinished by Lhuyd's untimely death from pleurisy, laid the groundwork for a comparative philology capable of recognizing and describing the relationships between the Brittonic Celtic languages (Welsh, Cornish, and Breton), their Goidelic cousins (Irish, Manx, Scots Gaelic), and their Gaulish and Continental Celtic ancestors. In an extraordinary series of journeys which would take him from the summit of Cader Idris to the Irish Burren, and from the Giant's Causeway into Argyllshire and up to the Highlands, Lhuyd and his companions hunted not just plants, minerals, and fossils for the growing collections at Oxford's Ashmolean Museum (of which he had been appointed Keeper in 1691), but manuscripts, word-lists, and living spoken dialects which gave linguistic heft to the vague concept of Celtic culture.[13] The *Archaeologia* even declares itself on the title page to be a kind of 'tour', the result of 'Collections and Observations in Travels through *Wales, Cornwal, Bas-Bretagne, Ireland* and *Scotland*'.

For many eighteenth-century travellers to Wales, however, Lhuyd was best known through his extensive annotations to William Gibson's 1697 edition of Camden's *Britannia*.[14] Indeed, the task of revising Camden's errors and filling in the more obvious gaps had been the initial motivation for his first research trips into Wales, and helped him establish a network of connections and correspondents which would later prove invaluable. Lhuyd's additions to Camden were extensive, and occasionally confrontational, particularly for areas such as Meirionydd and Caernarfonshire which Camden had not actually visited, and where Lhuyd's on-the-ground observation, or reliably supplied local information, contradicted or at least tempered the more extravagant claims of the text. These additions, though frequently concerned with noting botanical or geological features, also brought a native British perspective to the very Roman conceptual framework of Camden's original work.[15] His discussions of the cultural importance of *carneddau*, or great heaps of stones, or the significance of the glass beads known as *glain neidr*, all drew wider attention to the pre-Roman languages and customs of Britain.[16]

Throughout the century travellers to Wales show great interest in the British and Roman underlay of the landscape. Daniel Defoe, travelling before 1724, is clearly tormented by his resolution *not* to allow his antiquarian impulses to distract him from a general assessment of the country's economic potential:

> We saw a great many old monuments in this country, and Roman camps wherever we came, and especially if we met any person curious in such things, we found they had many Roman coins; but this was none of my enquiry, as I have said already.[17]

Thirty years later the much-travelled Reverend Richard Pococke had no such qualms. Inspired by the spurious *Itinerary* of Richard of Cirencester (a text well regarded by many throughout the eighteenth century), he hunted out inscribed stones, traipsed up to hill forts, and tried to identify Roman and British features around him, adding glamour to little market towns such as Builth ('Buellum Silurem') and Machynlleth ('Maglona').[18] The day-to-day realities of antiquarian touring were nicely summed up by Henry Penruddocke-Wyndham, who noted of a tour made in 1774: 'We had many views of old intrenchments from this rout, but they afforded a

small relief to the *taedium* of crawling through vile roads, and a melancholy waste.'[19] Yet he too would wax lyrical at Caerleon, where his entrancing description of the ruined Roman city is almost entirely mediated by Gerald of Wales, whom he cites in Latin, and then translates:

> here we still admire, both within and without the walls, subterraneous buildings, aqueducts and vaulted caverns; and what appeared to me most remarkable, stoves so excellently contrived, as to diffuse their heat through secret and imperceivable pores.[20]

In a present too dilapidated for the imagination to gain much purchase ('The present Caerleon is a melancholy contrast to the ancient, and scarcely a decent house is now to be seen in its streets')[21] the medieval text seems to stand mid-point between drab modernity and the shining Classical past. There is more than a hint of Warrington's 'Promethean' fire here, another reminder of the power of texts recalled *in situ* to summon the past. But the visual, and the material, both play their part too, since Wyndham also hunts out locals in possession of various artefacts (Roman bricks, a ring, a carved stone) and in subsequent editions of his tour includes many detailed drawings of them. Consciously or not, Wyndham's account, with Gerald as his cicerone, participates in the multi-temporal, multi-dimensional evocation of place and history already present in Classical and humanist writing. The literary 'walks through Rome' recently discussed by Andrew Hui and Susanna De Beer deploy a similarly multi-faceted process of 'imitation' which goes beyond merely engaging with earlier texts, and is 'an intricate part of the process of heritage construction, involving the selection, interpretation and appropriation of elements from the Roman legacy at large'.[22]

Wyndham's own description would ensure that Caerleon functioned in more than one tourist account as a focus for Roman Wales. It is, however, Snowdonia and the Menai Straits which most capture the antiquarian imaginations of later eighteenth-century travellers, many of whom re-iterate and reimagine the trope of Ancient British impregnability and cultural integrity already expressed in Camden and put rather elegantly by Defoe:

> These unpassable heights were doubtless the refuges of the Britains, when they made continual war with the Saxons and Romans, and retreated on occasion of their being over power'd, into these parts; where, in short, no enemy could pursue them.[23]

A clear sense of north-Welsh distinctiveness permeates another widely read travel narrative, the anonymous (and for Welsh writers, deeply provoking) *Letters from Snowdon* (1770).[24] The author, who by his own account spent several months resident in a small village in the mountains beyond Caernarfon, often feels himself in the presence of some ancient enemy ('the Ordovices of the Romans'). Profound cultural difference is often expressed in terms of the Welsh language ('whenever they speak of an Englishman, whom they still call *Saes* or *Saxon*, they always join some opprobious [sic] epithet'),[25] but linguistic alterity is only one strand of a more general, ethnic difference:

> IN observing the manners and customs of this people, some idea may be formed of their ancestors, the ancient Britons. They have preserved themselves almost intirely distinct from all other nations. They possessed nothing that could tempt the ambition of foreigners. Having no allurement from a prospect of commercial advantage, or the charms of opulence and fertility; they remained strangers to a country which afforded no incitement to avarice or ambition. Thus, I will not say unhappily, excluded from the conflux of strangers, the pure British blood flows unadulterated in their veins. Their customs, manners, virtues, and even vices, are preserved as a sacred *depositum*, inherited from their ancestors, and observed with religious veneration.[26]

Preserved, unadulterated, distinct: the 'Celt' is here situated beyond the reach or influence of Roman (or English) civilization. With the circulation of such ideas increasingly common in antiquarian circles by the 1770s, the stage was set for a flood of more popular writers bringing that peculiar double perspective, that sense of the deep past inhabiting the present, to their experience of both the inhabitants and the landscapes of north Wales. Many aspects of their productions, like so much travel writing, fall into the general tropes of primitivism, constructing a Welsh or Celtic 'Other' with traits (such as dirtiness or an innate ability to compose poetry) common to descriptions of native peoples the world over.[27] Yet it should be evident from some of the works already discussed—the writings of Edward Lhuyd and Henry Rowlands in particular—that we are dealing in reality with a collaborative construction, one in which Welsh speakers, knowledgeable (or sometimes not) about the history of their country, and often keen, too, to portray themselves as a race apart, played an important role.[28]

It is significant therefore that one of the most widely consulted of all Welsh tours in the late-eighteenth century was written by a Welshman,

Thomas Pennant of Downing, Flintshire (1726–98).[29] Pennant is another mediator, crossing several cultural lines. He came from an Anglicized Welsh gentry family with connections on his mother's side to the Shropshire borders; he had a house in London and social and business interests in nearby Chester, but was deeply interested in Welsh history and culture. Known by the 1760s as the author of a multi-volume illustrated *British Zoology*, he undertook two major journeys in Scotland in 1769 and 1772, both of which he wrote up and published to wide acclaim. The *Tours in Wales* followed, published 1778–84, and by the 1790s 'Mr Pennant' was acknowledged as a vital guide to once little-known parts of Britain now firmly on the tourist map.[30]

Pennant's *Tours* engage in interesting and complex ways with Roman and pre-Roman Britain, and reveal an intriguing fluidity of perspective in their occasional appraisal of relations between the British natives and their civilizing invaders. Caesar and Tacitus would have been familiar to Pennant from boyhood,[31] while the relative proximity of the Downing estate to Chester must have given the Roman past a substantial presence in his imagination from early on. Both Scottish and Welsh tours either start in or include Chester ('the Deva and Devane of Antonine, and the station of the Legio vicessima victrix')[32] and the map he produced after the 1772 Scottish tour writes Roman roads, forts, and camps back into the landscape of eighteenth-century Britain.[33] The *Tours* also reveal his knowledge of many of the century's key antiquarian texts, including works by William Stukeley, and the Scottish writers Alexander Gordon and John Horsley, while his own travels in Scotland took him to visit sections of the Antonine Wall, and to the supposed site of the 'famous camp which Mr *Gordon* contends to have been occupied by *Agricola*, immediately before the battle of *Mons Grampius*'.[34] As I have suggested elsewhere, Pennant's texts sometimes appear to reflect his own cultural ambiguities as a Welsh unionist in a post-1707 'Britannia'—hovering between an instinctive sympathy for rebellious native histories and approval of the unifying, improving, civilizing mission of the Roman Empire.[35] The opening to the first volume of the *Tour in Wales* is, in this respect, remarkably unabashed:

> I now speak of my native country, celebrated in our earliest history for its valour and tenacity of its liberty; for the stand it made against the *Romans*; for its slaughter of the

> legions; and for the subjection of the nation by *Agricola*, who did not dare to attempt his Caledonian expedition, and leave behind him unconquered so tremendous an enemy.[36]

Wales, like Scotland, has its own history of resistance, and the entire Caledonian campaign under Agricola depends on first conquering this 'tremendous enemy'.

With north Wales and the borders rich in known or potential sites, Pennant's *Tours* are full of references to both Romans and Britons. Many do no more than cast an antiquarian eye over shapes and forms, or pass on suggestions from Camden and others, but certain key places, Ancient Mona chief among them, attract more complex narratives. Pennant is stylistically more restrained than Warrington, but evidently feels something of the same magic: 'I now enter on classical ground, and the pious seats of the antient *Druids*; the sacred groves, the altars, and monumental stones.'[37] Deferring to 'the works of the celebrated and learned Mr Henry Rowlands' and to the research of his own early mentor, the Cornish antiquarian William Borlase, Pennant takes us from site to site, offering direct observations mostly tempered by his reading of these two scholars, and enlivened by quotation from Classical sources:

> Not far from it was one of the Gorseddau, now in a manner dispersed, but once consisted of a great copped heap of stones on which sate aloft a Druid instructing the surrounding people *multa de Deorum immortalium vi et potestate disputare, et juventuti tradunt*[38]

Here the Celtic past can, it seems, only be reached, and voiced, in the language of the Classical texts. At Trefwri, however, the dispersal and erasure of the deep past is countered with another voice, as Pennant summons the poet William Mason to his aid:

> At Trev Wry I saw several faint traces of circles of stones, and other vestiges of buildings, all so dilapidated, or hid in weeds, as to become almost formless. To divert our thoughts from their present dreary view, let us change the period to that in which they:
>
> Were tenanted by Bards, who nightly thence,
> Robed in their flowing vests of innocent white
> Issu'd with harps that glitter to the morn
> Hymning immortal strains†
>
> *Mr Mason's Caractacus.*[39]

Underlining Sam Smiles' account of the extraordinarily creative consequences of the paucity of evidence for early British history, Pennant

here significantly reaches for an *imagined* past, not a historical one, to fill the 'present dreary view'.[40] One of Mason's declared aims in his dramatic poem of 1759 was to give British 'historic forms' the 'soul of song', thus raising native history to a status more on a par with Classical subjects, while also giving Ancient Britons a voice.[41] His bards, who 'issue' from a secret intricate network of caves and tunnels on Anglesey to act as a chorus to the chief druid, owe much, of course, to Thomas Gray's twelfth-century Bard of 1757, defiant witness to another massacre of native poetic talent.[42] It was a connection Gray amiably acknowledged: 'I see methinks as I sit on Snowdon some glimpse of Mona and her haunted shades and hope we shall be very good neighbours.'[43] (He was writing from Stoke, and headed for Cambridge, where he promised to hunt for 'any Druidical anecdotes'.) Gray corresponded with contemporary Welsh scholars and had a good grasp of his material, but there is no evidence that either he or Mason ever actually visited north Wales; both, nonetheless, created characters whose presence in their imagined landscapes was palpable—Prys Morgan has suggested that some visitors to north Wales even asked to see the spot where Gray's Bard flung himself to his death.[44] Robed, bearded, Celtic-speaking, harp-playing remembrancers of their people, spun from thin and unreliable sources, these neighbourly Welsh druid-bards would soon be joined by their Gaelic counterpart, Ossian, and the 1760s would witness a remarkable Celtic Revival across Britain and into Europe.[45] This resurgence of interest in a specifically northern 'Antiquity' (sometimes 'Celtic', sometimes 'Gothic', though both labels were very fluid) has often been perceived as the start of a 'Romantic' rebellion against the dominant models of Augustan neoclassicism—a shift nicely epitomized by the moment when Goethe's tragic hero Werther notes in his diary: '*Ossian hat in meinem Herzen den Homer verdrängt*' ('Ossian has replaced Homer in my heart').[46] Yet, as Nick Groom has pointed out, this critical tendency to pit a Classical against a Celtic antiquity understates the extent to which the two movements were complementary and even entwined.[47] *Ossian*, after all, derived much of its literary prestige precisely from being situated by Hugh Blair in a Homeric context; the figure of the blind, inspired poet, the singer of past heroic exploits, belongs equally to Classical and Celtic traditions.

The work of Sam Smiles persuasively demonstrates how the stock image of the bearded druid—inherited from that earlier period of fascination with Celtic themes, the sixteenth century—blurred into the imagery of the Last Bard to become a kind of visual shorthand for a transhistorical narrative of British resistance to a dominant colonial power.[48] The relatively narrow palette of themes and images found, with each new decade, new political contexts: as Edith Hall argues in this volume and elsewhere, when Mason adapted *Caractacus* for the stage in 1776, its meanings were reframed and reinvigorated in the wake of the wars of American Independence.[49] Like the English-language Celtic-inspired poems, the bardic-themed paintings of Paul Sandby, Thomas Jones, Philippe de Loutherbourg, John Smith, and many others also provided ready materials for the imaginations, not just of antiquaries such as Warrington or Pennant, but also of the hundreds of less erudite travellers who came after them into both Wales and Scotland.[50] By 1801 it was even possible to buy a porcelain Bardic Mug, the familiar rugged, bearded features nicely set off against a crisp blue background.[51] Yet the narrative of resistance embodied in this iconography was far from uncomplicated.

While treading the ‘classical ground’ of Anglesey Pennant also quotes at length, first in Latin, and then in translation, from Tacitus’ description of the Britons facing the invading army of Suetonius on the far shores of the Menai—the wild-haired women with torches, the druids calling down the wrath of the gods and performing bloody sacrifices. (‘What a scene was this!’ he concludes with typical impartiality, ‘and how worthy of the pencil of an inspired painter!’)[52] As the essays in this volume demonstrate in a variety of ways, one major consequence of the sparse and contradictory nature of the Classical sources was the burden it placed on modern commentators, who had to negotiate, more or less gracefully, the apparently Jekyll-and-Hyde nature of the Celts in general and their druids in particular. Since these primitive dispensers of wisdom and justice were also the barbarous readers of human entrails, their extirpation at the hands of the brutally efficient but undeniably civilized Roman army was not altogether to be lamented. Countless eighteenth- and nineteenth-century travellers, faced with a ‘sacrificial’ stone, struggle to express their conflicted responses. Warrington’s imagination, as we have seen, simply ‘dissolves’ at the sight of blood. Pennant, more scientifically, assesses his

secondary sources, and examines the evidence of the stones themselves, agreeing with Borlase that the great cromlechs were more likely to have been sepulchral monuments than places of slaughter; yet was not averse to imagining prisoners awaiting their doom in a cell inside one of the *carneddau*.

The 1784 edition of the *Tour in Wales* contains, for this section of the text, engravings of two scenes by Pennant's principal artist Moses Griffith; one is of the large cromlech at Plas Newydd, the other offers a 'fine view of the noble curvature of the Menai' (given, Pennant assures us, 'with the utmost fidelity').[53] But Pennant's own, bespoke, gorgeously extra-illustrated copy is adorned with images which have been cut, quite literally, out of Rowlands' *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* and other works.[54] These are mostly the diagrammatic (and optimistic) ground plans of the various temples, alleys, and *carneddau* which Rowlands discerned in the landscape around him, but also include his famous image of 'The Chief Druid', robed, bearded, and holding a staff and a sprig of oak, copied from a similar picture in Aylett Sammes' influential *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* (1676).[55] [Fig. 7.1]

Fig. 7.1. ‘The Chief Druid’, from Henry Rowlands’ *Mona Antiqua Restaurata* (1766). Taken from Thomas Pennant’s Extra-illustrated *A Tour in Wales*. Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/National Library of Wales.

Interspersed with these are two scenes taken from a publication called *The Complete English Traveller* (1771), which between them express the complex dual perception of the druids as both victims and perpetrators of terrible acts; one [Fig. 7.2] an elegant and geographically appropriate massacre-of-the-druids scene, the other [Fig. 7.3], itself adapted from Aylett Sammes, a striking wicker-man, crammed with sacrificial victims, moved wholesale from *The Complete English Traveller*’s Salisbury Plain section in Wiltshire.[56]

Fig. 7.2. ‘Murdering the Druids and Burning their Groves’, from *The Complete English Traveller* (1772). Taken from Thomas Pennant’s Extra-illustrated *A Tour in Wales*. Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/National Library of Wales.

Fig. 7.3. ‘The Wicker Colossus of the Druids’, from *The Complete English Traveller* (1772). Taken from Thomas Pennant’s Extra-illustrated *A Tour in Wales*. Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru/National Library of Wales.

Native wisdom brutally extirpated, or superstitious barbarity wiped out in the name of progress? The productive ambiguity at the heart of the iconic figure of the British druid or bard continued to throw out new iterations for a changing social and political context. In the revolutionary decade of the 1790s, Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, and perhaps above all William Blake, gave the darker side of druidism—its abuse of power—much freer play.[57] The Welsh poet Edward Williams (Iolo Morganwg) and his London-based friend William Owen Pughe countered with druid-bards who were learned, democratic, monotheistic pacifists.[58] Like these writers, many of those who travelled to Anglesey in the 1790s were in effect the inheritors of the first rush of bardic enthusiasm in the 1760s and 1770s, and had a wealth of text and imagery upon which to draw. One final incursion into the sacred groves of Anglesey explores the responses of two of these travellers.

By the end of the eighteenth century Britain was in the middle of a European war, begun in 1793 as a response to the excesses of the French Revolution, and in hopes of consolidating and extending British power in the West Indies. Things were not going well. In 1796 and 1797 Napoleon’s fleets had attempted west-coast invasions of Ireland and Wales, and the 1798 rising of United Irishmen had turned Ireland into a war zone. On Anglesey and the north coast of Wales tourists found themselves jostling for space on the roads and in lodgings with soldiers and refugees. It was around this time that the young J.M.W. Turner, on his fourth or fifth tour of Wales, produced a series of draft sketches of Caernarfon castle, set against a backdrop of manoeuvring warships and bloody sunsets.[59] Loyalist poets put Ancient British history to good use when composing stirring songs to their local militia:

> When conquering Cæsar did draw first,
> The sword of Desolation,
> And first, amazed, Britannia saw

The curse of bold Invasion;
The Druids, fam'd of Mona's Isle,
Did bravely yield their breath, Sir,
And rather than in bondage toil,
They chose a glorious death, Sir.[60]

'Britannia' here is at last blissfully uncomplicated. Faced with a real external threat, the uneasy and shifting parameters of Them and Us (Romans versus Celts; English versus Welsh) can be safely reformulated as Britain versus France. The many similar songs and poems produced in Wales, in both languages, at this period, offer support to Linda Colley's argument that war with France was an important factor in the creation of a modern British identity right across the different cultures of the British Isles.[61] We are all druids now. Nevertheless, the druids of Mona were by no means lost to counter-narratives—to voices of dissent or opposition determined to critique the status quo.

The Birmingham bookseller William Hutton and his daughter Catherine spent three summers—1797, 1799, and 1800—in north Wales. Based in Caernarfon for several weeks at a time, they undertook excursions from their lodgings into Snowdonia, the Llŷn peninsula, and Anglesey. Both left accounts of their travels, and both were published, William Hutton's as *Remarks upon North Wales* (1803), and Catherine Hutton's as a series of articles which appeared in the *Monthly Magazine* between 1815 and 1819, after she had begun her career as a novelist.[62] William Hutton came from an extremely poor labouring-class background and was self-taught; he produced the first ever history of Birmingham, and was closely linked to the city's Dissenting culture.[63] His wife Sarah, Catherine's mother, had died after a long illness in 1796, and the journeys to Wales were undertaken very much in the spirit of recuperation and restoration after a difficult period for them both. Intelligent and sympathetic writers, and both great readers of Thomas Pennant, the differences between their accounts—gendered and generational—are revealing.

William Hutton's published account of Anglesey condenses into a single tour the experiences of 'many trips into the island to follow the footsteps of its old inhabitants, and particularly the Druids'.[64] His style is

plain, tending to brevity and wit, and the narrative unrolls in short, titled sections which take the reader from site to site. He refers to Rowlands, and he has certainly read Pennant, who haunts the opening line of his account of Bryn Gwyn: 'Now I seem to enter classic ground, where those objects of antiquity open, beyond which British history cannot penetrate.'[65] Elsewhere, though, Hutton's voice is distinctively his own. Tre'r Drwr Bach, he notes, was:

> the habitation of the inferior Druid, who, perhaps, superintended the service of the church, for we may fairly suppose the Arch Druid too ill, or too indolent to attend in person. His business was more with the fleece than the flock.

Most of his encounters with ancient monuments provoke expressions not of awe, or revulsion, or the poignant *ubi sunt* of Pennant, but of robust anti-clericalism, with modern parallels left in no doubt. In what may be a unique take on the extraordinary stability of the iconography of druidism, he notes that priestly garb ('a white surplice and a large beard') has remained effectively the same, and this because 'it carries with it a freehold title to power and profit':

> The beard, which is no other than hair upon the head, has varied in appearance, but not in use. The ancient Druid wore his upon the fore part of his head, the chin; the Divine, in our Day, on the back or contrary part of his, vulgarly called a wig. The use of both was to inspire reverence in the observer, and pride in the wearer, who thought it of the utmost importance. Both grew to an enormous size, and were attended with the same powers and effects.
>
> No Druid of ancient days, or preacher of ours, could make a figure without a bush upon one side or other of his head.[66]

At Plas Newydd, confronted at last with the great cromlech ('this altar of death'), Hutton's lively mockery is forced into darker speculation:

> 'Is that *religion* which delights in blood! Can that man be a proper *minister* of religion whose daily practice is cutting throats! And can that people, who delight in the spectacle, be anything other than savages?' It would still increase the sorrowful idea, if the cruel lesson, taught by *that* generation is, even in a small degree, applicable to this.[67]

Even in a small degree. The rhetoric of druidic sacrifice is heady stuff, but at a period when much of the established church was committed to supporting and encouraging the long-running war through prayers, official

fast days, and sermons, the notion that religious leaders had blood on their hands was not uncommon even in moderately radical circles. Just as for William Blake, the dark side of druidism for Hutton is located not at the resistant peripheries of Britain, but at its institutional heart.[68] For William Warrington two decades earlier the vision of human blood had triggered the immediate and reassuring dissolution of the past; Hutton is far more inclined to drag it uncomfortably into the present.

Travelling, unusually for a woman of her class, on horseback, in the company of her father and a male servant, Catherine Hutton wrote up her experiences of Wales in a series of letters to her brother Thomas. A fair draft of these letters, already showing her editorial revisions, survives in manuscript.[69] Comparison with the texts published in the *Monthly Magazine*, many years after the actual journeys and at a point when Hutton herself was becoming known as a novelist, shows that the manuscript preserves more intimate and often much livelier details of her travels, and this can be seen in one or two cases where Celtic and Classical themes come into play.

It has long been recognized that the eighteenth century's easy familiarity with the Classics was highly gendered, reflecting the standard differing educational models for girls and boys: Penelope Wilson speaks of Classical knowledge as a 'phenomenon and preoccupation of élite masculinity'.[70] The ability to read landscape through Tacitus or Caesar was not, for female travellers, a given, and Elizabeth Edwards has shown how this might affect their responses to such heavily Classics-mediated sites;[71] it is not wholly surprising then that a search for the word 'Roman' in Catherine's letters yields only 'romance' and 'romantic'. Yet Catherine Hutton, well-educated and an avid reader of history and geography, was far from being excluded from the Classical world, and was also quite capable of engaging with the Ancient British past.[72] She draws on Classical mythology, for example, to refer to the death of the man who had rowed them, and shown them great kindness, on the lakes of Llanberis the preceding summer:

> Richard Williams, the worthy rower of Cwm-y-Glo, has exchanged his own boat for that of Charon, and the lakes of Llanberis for the river Styx.[73]

In the manuscript version, in an uncharacteristically awkward insertion at the end of this sentence, she adds ‘according to the creed of Grecian poets, and their imitators to the present day’.[74] This unnecessary explanation may, perhaps, indicate a level of uncertainty about her ‘right’ to drop Classical allusions without acknowledging some other authority;[75] or it may be that she feels she is writing for an audience who needs it. It is easier to understand the gap between the printed and the private version of her account of the well of St Beuno at Clynnog, which:

> is enclosed by a quadrangular stone wall, but is open at the top. Woe be to him that approaches it without caution! For it is surrounded by offerings more likely to be acceptable to a heathen goddess than a Christian saint.[76]

In the manuscript, the rather vague ‘heathen goddess’ is named as ‘Cloacina’: not, perhaps, a name for a respectable lady writer to conjure with.[77]

In 1799 Catherine Hutton accompanied her father on an excursion to Anglesey. They rode to the ferry at Moel y Don and sent the horses on to Bangor so that they could walk the relevant section of the coast. Catherine spent most of this holiday in a state of feverish ill health. Like virtually all of her more personal experiences, this is removed from the published account. Her determination not to allow her weakness to prevent her from undertaking this walk of six or seven miles is a measure of her ‘ardent curiosity to see the Carnedd and the Cromlech’, and there is something touching in the way she has to manage her depleted resources of physical energy along the way.[78] Like her father, she seems to half-echo Pennant as she enters the wooded estate:

> I thought myself here on hallowed ground, and looked around me with a scrutinizing eye, expecting every moment to see some monument of the religion of my ancestors rise before me. We had walked through the woods, perhaps, a quarter of a mile, when pointing to a hill on our left I cried, ‘What is that?’ My father went to see, and I, who durst not make one step in vain, sat down under a tree. He beckoned and I sprung up. It was the carnedd, the sepulchre of some distinguished Briton.[79]

The description which follows is scientific, noting height and circumference, the nature of the stone used in the burial mound, its current overgrown state, and the fact that it had been ‘formerly opened’. They continue to Plas Newydd, the property of Lord Uxbridge. Here Hutton is

critical of his Lordship's ill-advised and historically insensitive determination to plant his grounds with sycamore: 'By oaks, the native produce of our islands, and their pride, these sacred remains of antiquity were once surrounded; and I still consider, as an appendage to the Cromlech, all other wood prophane.'[80] The cromlech itself arouses the familiar mixture of admiration and revulsion:

> While I looked with awe on the works of man that had lasted, perhaps two thousand years, and figured to myself the white-robed Druids and their smoaking fires; my heart recoiled at the idea that, on this very altar, my fellow-creatures, possibly my progenitors, had been sacrificed by the dictates of a barbarous religion.[81]

'My progenitors', like 'the religion of my ancestors' in the citation above, is interesting: Hutton, Birmingham born and raised, with no especially Celtic ties by blood, clearly feels that the Ancient Britons are part of *her* history, of her inheritance, linguistic and cultural differences in the present notwithstanding. Her open-minded and positive attitude to Wales and the Welsh offers a marked contrast to the author of the *Letters from Snowdon*, and suggests that she for one sensed no 'ancient enemy' here.

Conclusion

This chapter has tried to make a general case for the value of travel writing as a resource in understanding the perception and consumption of history and prehistory in Britain. More specifically, it suggests that the localization of Celts and Romans in a particular Welsh landscape induced a kind of historical empathy, which brought an immediacy and a complexity to the writers' understanding of the conflictual nature of the British past. The confrontational terrain of Anglesey's druid groves excited questions about the nature of power and the relative state of 'civilization' in central and peripheral cultures; few writers found these issues easy to settle one way or the other, and many found telling political parallels in their own times. Focusing principally on Ancient Mona has left important sites, and some important questions, untouched—travellers to Scotland, for example, found equally complex meanings in the Antonine Wall, and much to puzzle over in the cultural and linguistic divisions of Highlands and Lowlands; Nigel Leask's work suggests that

the ‘Fingalian topographies’ of Ossianic tourism both mirrored and differed from the Bardic Wales of Mason and Gray.[82] Accounts of eighteenth-century Bath, a mecca for visitors from all over Britain, could hardly avoid drawing parallels between Roman and Hanoverian civilizations, their virtues, their luxuries, and vices. Nevertheless, certain key points hold.

As we have seen, much of the historical information on display in these writings can be traced to specific sources. Some, such as the accounts of Caesar and Tacitus, are ‘direct’, and constitute evidence for our understanding of early Britain to this day; others are mediated through medieval or antiquarian works such as Gerald of Wales or Camden’s *Britannia.* Many also draw on earlier travel writers for their information, with Thomas Pennant a favourite source among these, at least for Wales and Scotland. Operating in conjunction with this historical/antiquarian channel is an overlapping and surprisingly potent body of creative work—poetry, drama, and visual art—which brings life and a vivid iconography to the historical and antiquarian imagination.

But the perception of the past in travel writing has two further and wholly fundamental dimensions, both of them evoked in the recurring phrase ‘on classical ground’: that of place, and that of the writer’s physical experience of place. What William Stukeley, kindred spirit of Henry Rowlands, calls ‘the satisfaction of viewing realities’[83] is nicely evidenced by Pennant’s admission that when visiting the large *carnedd* at Plas Newydd he ‘crept over a flag’ placed across its entrance, and found in the roof-stone ‘two semicircular holes, of size sufficient to take in the human neck’. This cramped stone cell leads him to reflect on the ‘conjecture, … not an improbable one, that in this place had been kept the wretches destined for sacrifice’.[84] The experience of confinement, of putting oneself *in place*, induces a kind of historical sympathy which goes beyond (and enhances) the power of words. It operates, as Warrington noted (presciently evoking a Classical hero much favoured in later Romantic writing), as a kind of ‘Promethean’ fire, a way of summoning inspiration. Among the pictures pasted in at the Anglesey section of Pennant’s extra-illustrated edition of the *Tour in Wales* is a lovely Moses Griffith watercolour of a riderless horse waiting patiently in front of just such an overgrown mound—presumably for its dishevelled antiquarian owner to emerge.[85]

Perception of the past can thus be thought of as partly contingent on the state and strength of the body (Catherine Hutton's exhaustion; Warrington's appetite for his dinner), as well as on more general environmental factors such as ease of access, or the weather. And the chemistry of text and place is not infallible, since being on location sometimes merely brings home the impossibility of reaching back far enough. In 1795 a 'greatly disappointed' Joseph Hucks found, on Anglesey, 'little more than a few shapeless stones', and mourned his lack of connection with a past 'so lost, so forgotten'. The relevant excerpts from Tacitus and Caesar are quoted, but to no avail: 'I looked around me in vain for those awe-inspiring shades and venerable temples where the druids used to perform their mysterious rites.'[86]

At the start of William Mason's *Caractacus*, even the Romans tread softly. Approaching the 'secret centre of the isle', their commander, unsettled that a place devoted to 'barb'rous superstition' could provoke such awe, bids his men 'gaze on the solemn scene' and feel its power:

> As if the very Genius of the place
> Himself appear'd, and with terrific tread
> Stalk'd thro' his drear domain. (p. 1)

The act of walking, of treading, is mentioned several times in this opening scene, always with great solemnity. 'Daring Roman,' says one of the British captives, pre-echoing scores of reverential tourists to come, 'Thy footsteps press on consecrated ground.' (p. 2). Indeed, the choreographies here are multiple, and layered. This spot made sacred by the ritual steps of the druid and the 'stalking' Genius of place has a deeper, underground level—

> Underneath the soil we tread, a hundred secret paths
> Scoopt thro' the living rock in winding maze (p. 3)

—as well as a kind of celestial version of itself replicated in the heavens by the 'just gods that tread yon spangled pavement above our heads' (p. 6). One effect of Mason's druidic chorus, as Edith Hall has noted, was to encourage debate on the nature and function of the Greek chorus on which

it was modelled—a debate which opens out onto the ritual use of space in dance, religion, and astronomy in both ancient British and Classical times.[87] But foot-stepping the past is also the task of less-elevated mortals, the curious travellers of the last two centuries. The profanity of tourism, the ubiquity of it, and its wave upon summer wave of invasions and incursions, have dulled us, perhaps, to its more personal mysteries, and caused us to lose sight of the complex cultural mesh that lies behind the act of treading on significant ground.[88]

Mary-Ann Constantine, *Celts and Romans on Tour: Visions of Early Britain in Eighteenth-Century Travel Literature* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0007

[1] Warrington (1776) 42.

[2] Warrington (1776) vi. William Warrington was the author of a successful *History of Wales* (1786), which was reprinted four times by 1823. His authorship of this manuscript tour is confirmed in a letter to Thomas Pennant which notes his earlier plan to make 'Three, separate historical tours into the Principalities of North Wales' (Warrington 1778). The project never came to fruition.

[3] Warrington (1776) 43.

[4] Hingley (2008) 4–7; Sweet (2004) 177.

[5] Warrington (1776) v.

[6] These statistics are derived from Michael Freeman's database of Welsh Tours; I am very grateful to him for sharing this information. Freeman's website, 'Early Tourists in Wales', is a useful resource and can be found at https://sublimewales.wordpress.com/.

[7] Batten (1978) 8. The subject is gaining critical ground: useful recent treatments of British tours include Colbert (2012) and Kinsley (2008). Digital editions of previously unpublished eighteenth- and nineteenth-century tours of Wales and Scotland are being made available at http://www.curioustravellers.ac.uk.

[8] The editors do, in all fairness, set out their relatively stringent definition of 'English literature' from the outset: Hopkins and Martindale (2012) 2–4.

[9] Rowlands (1723) 'Preface'.

[10] Rowlands (1723) 'Preface'.

[11] Thomas Pennant found this implausible: 'but I believe it is certain that Shrewsbury was the farthest limit of his travels' (1784) II, 242.

[12] Lhuyd (1707); Evans and Roberts (2007) and (2009).

[13] Campbell (1960); Campbell and Thomson (1963).

[14] For a detailed account of Lhuyd's involvement with *Britannia* see Cramsie (2015) 335–91. For Camden's significance in his own time, see Schwyzer in this volume, 79–96.

[15] Piggott (1951).

[16] James and Walters (1984) is a useful edition of the Wales section of *Britannia* (1722), with Lhuyd's additions.

[17] Defoe (1724) II, 90–1.

[18] Cartwright (1888–9) II, 23 and 180. The forged Roman *itinerarium* attributed to 'Richard of Cirencester' was in fact the work of an eighteenth-century scholar based in Copenhagen. See Sweet (2004) 175–8.

[19] Penruddocke-Wyndham (1775) 191.

[20] Penruddocke-Wyndham (1775) 13. Given Wyndham's evident fascination with the place, it is amusing to find the following comment in an annotated interleaved copy of his *Tour*, written to guide a third party round south Wales: 'Unless your friend is a proffes'd antiquarian I think Caerleon is not worth your attention.' Cited in Kenyon (1990) 362.

[21] Penruddocke-Wyndham (1775) 20.

[22] De Beer (2017) 26. Many of these, to compound the temporal confusion, pay homage to Aeneas's proleptic tour of the site of the future Rome in Book 8 of the *Aeneid*. Andrew Hui (2011) nicely explores the layered chronologies of the 'textual city' in the context of epic poetry.

[23] Defoe (1724) 92–3.

[24] [Anon] (1770): the work is often erroneously attributed to Joseph Cradock. For the controversy caused by the author's unpleasant remarks on the Welsh peasantry see Constantine (forthcoming).

[25] [Anon] (1770) 6.

[26] [Anon] (1770) 62–3.

[27] For a wide-ranging analysis of 'Celticism' based on the model of Edward Said's influential *Orientalism* (1978), see the essays in Brown (1996).

[28] The fluid and evolving concept of eighteenth-century identities based on conceptions of the early British past is analyzed by Kaminski-Jones (2017).

[29] Evans (1987); see also Evans (1985) and (1993).

[30] Constantine and Leask (2017) 1–14; Leask (2020) 97–135.

[31] For the school curriculum see Wilson (2012a).

[32] Pennant (1771) 2.

[33] Walters (1976). Pennant's map can be viewed at: http://curioustravellers.ac.uk/map/#zoom=6&lat=56.0025&lon=-4.3008&point=0,0.

[34] Pennant (1776) 96–7. Tacitus' account of this battle, at which the Caledonian leader Calgacus makes a powerful anti-imperial speech, resonates at several points in Pennant's *Tours*. Other literary references to Calgacus are noted by Weinbrot (1993) 279; Bradley (2010) explores nineteenth-century responses to Agricola. The genre of the 'enemy speech' in Classical literature is explored at length in Adler (2011).

[35] Constantine (2017a).

[36] Pennant (1784) I, 1.

[37] Pennant (1784) II, 229.

[38] Pennant (1784) II, 230. Pennant's rather condensed citation comes from the well-known section in Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* (*BG* 6.14.6): '*Multa praeterea desideribus atque eorum motu, de mundi ac terrarum magnitudine, de rerum natura, de deorum immortalium vi ac potestate disputant, et juventuti tradunt.*' ('They also hold long discussions about the heavenly bodies and their movements, the size of the universe and of the earth, the physical constitution of the world, and the power and properties of the gods; and they instruct the young men in all these subjects.') Handford (1951) 33.

[39] Pennant (1784) II, 231.

[40] See Smiles (1994). Smiles' concern with *how* the past is constructed and used allows him greater scope with eighteenth-century creativity than Stuart Piggott (1989), whose more archaeologically focused study acts as both model and foil to Smiles' own work.

[41] Mason (1759). For a detailed discussion of the work see Hall (2005).

[42] 'The Bard' first appeared in *Odes by Mr. Gray* in 1757, and imagines the bloody (and unhistorical) confrontation between Edward I and the proscribed Welsh poets. See Prescott (2008) 57–83.

[43] Mason (1820) 242; cited in Watson (2003) 89.

[44] P. Morgan (1981) 120–1.

[45] Snyder (1923) remains an excellent introduction; there is by now a vast literature on responses to James Macpherson's notorious adaptation of Gaelic Ossianic poetry, but the essays in Gaskill (2004) offer a good overview.

[46] Goethe (1996) 82.

[47] Groom (2008).

[48] See in particular his comment on Thomas Jones's painting *The Bard* (1774) and 'its symbolic articulation of the continuities between Welsh medieval culture and prehistoric Celtic society', Smiles (1994) 53.

[49] Hall (2005) 183–4, 190.

[50] For discussions of these paintings and others on bardic–druidic themes see Smiles (1994) 53–62, and Lord (2000) 97–115.

[51] Lord (2000) 156.

[52] Pennant (1784) II, 247.

[53] Pennant (1784) II, 248.

[54] The Downing eight-volume extra-illustrated tour has been digitized by the National Library of Wales, and can be viewed page by page at: https://www.llgc.org.uk/en/discover/digital-gallery/pictures/a-tour-in-wales/. The process of extra-illustration absorbed Pennant over decades, and formed a principal topic of his correspondence with Richard Bull. See Evans (1998), and Jones (2019): https://editions.curioustravellers.ac.uk/pages/new_look_Pennant_Bull.html.

[55] For the image by Aylett Sammes see Smiles (1994) 79, and Lord (1994) 106–7.

[56] Spencer (1771). This was a county-by-county compilation of information rather than a 'tour'.

[57] Gravil (2003): see pp. 37–42 for druidic sacrifice in relation to Wordsworth's 1794 'Salisbury Plain'. For Blake see Smiles (1994) 91–6 and Fisher (1959), who reads Blake in dialogue with Iolo Morganwg's druido-bardism.

[58] For Iolo Morganwg see Charnell-White (2007); Constantine (2007) examines his version of bardism in the light of the *Ossian* debate.

[59] For Turner's tours in Wales see Wilton (1984). The Caernarfon sketches can be viewed on the Tate's website. See, e.g., http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-caernarvon-castle-n01867; http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-caernarvon-castle-with-shipping-moonlight-d01866.

[60] T. Ellis Owen, 'Anglesey Volunteer Song' in Edwards (2013) 221–4.

[61] Colley (1992).

[62] Hutton (1803); Constantine (2017b).

[63] Hutton (1816); Whyman (2015) and (2018).

[64] Hutton (1803) 179.

[65] Hutton (1803) 180.

[66] Hutton (1803) 184–5.

[67] Hutton (1803) 197–8.

[68] See, for example, Fisher's reading of Blake: 'The Druidic rite of human sacrifice was the central symptom of a disintegrating society where all sacrifice was regulated from without and the sacrificial victim was the scapegoat for society's ills.' (1959) 604–5.

[69] Hutton ('MS Letters'). This version of Catherine Hutton's tours is currently being prepared for publication, and will be available at http://www.curioustravellers.ac.uk.

[70] Wilson (2012a) 30.

[71] Edwards (2016) considers the responses of another female novelist, Anne Plumptre, to these druidic sites.

[72] For women's access to Classical literature in the period see Wilson (2012b), on a range of writers from highly educated linguists, such as the bluestocking Elizabeth Carter, to the labouring-class poets Mary Collier and Ann Yearsley.

[73] Hutton ('Published Letters', vol. 46, 1818) 130; letter dated 28 August 1800.

[74] Hutton ('MS Letters') 112; letter dated 28 August 1800.

[75] Issues of female 'authority' in relation to travel-writing are explored in Thompson (2017).

[76] Hutton ('Published Letters', vol. 47, 1819) 307; letter dated 12 September 1800.

[77] Hutton ('MS Letters') 117; letter dated 2 September 1800.

[78] Hutton ('MS Letters') 86; letter dated 30 August 1799.

[79] Hutton ('MS Letters') 86–7.

[80] Hutton ('MS Letters') 87. Oaks of course have long been associated with mistletoe-gathering druids; see, e.g., Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, 16.95, who also speculates on their etymological link with the Greek word for the oak-tree (*δρῦς*). Exactly the same link would be made by the Humanist scholar Dr John Davies (1567–1644), between the words *derw* (oak) and *derwydd* (druid) in Welsh—an etymology which has remained irresistible ever since. See *Geiriadur Prifysgol Cymu*, s.v. *derwydd*.

[81] Hutton ('MS Letters') 88.

[82] Keppie (2012); Constantine (2017a) 69–71; Leask (2016) and (2020).

[83] Cited from Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* (1724) in Haycock (2002) 110.

[84] Pennant (1784) II, 247.

[85] The image can be viewed at: https://viewer.library.wales/4691510#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=140&xywh=0%2C-1325%2C7208%2C7476.

[86] Jones and Tydeman (1975) 36–9; also cited and discussed in Edwards (2016).

[87] Hall (2005) 198–207.

[88] The research for this article was undertaken as part of an AHRC-funded grant, ‘Curious Travellers: Thomas Pennant and the Welsh and Scottish Tour, 1760–1820’. I would like to thank the editors and a thoughtful reader at Oxford University Press for their helpful comments on this piece.

8

British Imperialist and/or Avatar of Welshness?

Caractacus Performances in the Long Nineteenth Century

Edith Hall

Noah was a Welshman, built his ark of wood;
Cutting down the Welsh oak, found it very good.
Solomon, a Welshman, got his tin from Wales.
Caractacus licked all the world because he drank Welsh ales.
Queen, she was a Welshman, Ap Tudwr was her name;
Prince of Wales a Welshman, from Carnarvon came;
Everybody Welshman, Welshman everything.
Clwych, Clwych, [sic] *let the bells of Aberdovey ring.*

[Part of a popular poem quoted in *The London Kelt* (1896) from an 1856 source[1]]

An important component of the National Eisteddfod of 1894, held in Caernarfon, was an evening concert presided over by the thirty-one-year-old David Lloyd George. Since 1890 he had been Member of Parliament for Carnarvon Boroughs. During the interval, Lloyd George delivered an address in Welsh, ‘pointing out that the eisteddfod was a proof that Wales followed the muse and song when other countries in Europe had sunk into

barbarity'.[2] The climax of the concert was orchestral, 'the first performance of a new overture, *Caractacus*, composed by Mr J.H. Roberts', which was 'accorded a hearty reception'.[3]

If we fast-forward twenty-two years, to 17 June 1916, we discover another patriotic Caractacus-themed performance in Wales to which the discussion will return at the conclusion of this chapter. The notice under the title 'Brynamman' printed in *Herald of Wales and Monmouthshire Recorder* on that day read (p. 2):

> Private Gwyn Williams. Royal Welsh Fusiliers, of Llandeilo Road, Brynamman, has been killed in action. He was 23 years of age. A brother, Private Griff J. Williams, is serving in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. Five performances of *Caractacus* were given by the Lower Brynamman Council School children at the schools last week, under the supervision of Mr. Willie Thomas, C.M., the choir being conducted by Mr. John. Morgan, A.L.C.M., C.M., both of the staff.

About a month later, another local newspaper, after reporting the death in action of a further Brynamman man, Priv. Morgan Morgans of the Gordon Highlanders, and the wounding of a third, Priv. Tom Parry, refers to the same school theatrical. The Brynamman branch of the British Red Cross Society, active as never before in the relief of wounded servicemen, had passed a vote of thanks to the committee and choristers responsible for *Caractacus* in gratitude for their donation of the proceeds.[4]

Imperial ideology is a messy business. It is at its most complicated when an empire which has taken centuries to develop is still in the process of adding to its roll-call of ethnic, national, and class identities both near the centre of metropolitan power and far away across the planet. Such was the situation in which the British Empire found itself during its late-nineteenth-century and Edwardian heyday. This chapter investigates the particular convolutions of the identity politics revealing the tension between the ideas of Britishness and Welshness in the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Historians of sport have noted the central role played by rugby 'in the popular incorporation of Welsh indigenous and British Imperial personas into the new definition of Welshness' which emerged at this time.[5] But the Classical figure in whom this tension was crystallized, and whose representations are the primary focus of my argument, is the chieftain of the first century AD known to the ancient Greeks and Romans as Caratacus or Caractacus, and to Welsh speakers as Caradog.

How can an ancient warrior to whom only a few paragraphs in Classical historians are devoted be co-opted both as a forefather of Welsh ethnic identity (grounded in the living Welsh language and at times resistant to British rule) and as a heroic prototype of the British imperialist fearlessly imposing 'civilized' values on a worldwide empire? After providing some historical depth by identifying an important stage in the reception of Caractacus prior to the nineteenth century, the discussion addresses the ideological project and lasting impact of the 1898 cantata *Caractacus*, with music by Edward Elgar to a libretto by Harry Arbuthnot Acworth. The most significant response to this celebrated work was the wave of Caractacus plays, musicals, and oratorios performed in the first decade and a half of the twentieth century in Welsh schools. These fostered a fiery Welsh national identity committed to the British imperial project that David Lloyd George was to exploit in his 1914 recruitment drive. Caractacus furnished one of the most prominent filaments in the vivid tapestry of Welsh cultural and regional history experienced during the three decades between the appearance of Lloyd George on the political scene and the unprecedented casualties inflicted on Wales by World War I.

The British reception of Caractacus (and there has been little interest in him outside Britain) had always been bound up with the expansion of the British Empire, and in particular the British conquest of India. This can be seen as inaugurated by the battle of Plassey in 1757, which proved pivotal in terms of British control of both Bengal and India more widely.[6] Two years later, the Yorkshire churchman William Mason published his play *Caractacus*, which he intended 'to fight the cause of liberty and Britain';[7] it was to become the single most influential work in the history of the reception of this ancient British warrior. The drama, like almost all *Caractacus* narratives subsequently, stages a conflation of Tacitus' description of the indomitable Briton captured during the reign of Claudius (*Annals* 12.33–7), who delivered a courageous speech at Rome, with the same historian's account of the last stand of the druids of Mona (Anglesey) against Suetonius Paulinus (*Annals* 14.29–30); some details are added from Cassius Dio's *Roman History* 60–1. Mason fused this content with features from Greek tragedy, imitating the plot of Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*, and including a singing, dancing, involved, and interactive tragic chorus.[8]

The experience of the British in India fostered an increasingly complex set of cultural aetiologies, which included the discovery and celebration of ancient Brahmin literature. It was felt to offer numerous parallels to the ancient literature of Wales and Ireland. Gaelic, Welsh, Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit were declared the oldest of the Indo-European tongues,[9] while the self-consciously Welsh Orientalist Sir William Jones, a Judge in Bengal, went beyond comparative linguistics to trace equivalences of religious and social institutional development in India, early Britain, and the ancient Mediterranean basin.[10] But before he left for India, Jones had also been inspired by Mason's play to gaze across Conway Bay, and confide in his companions that the view thrilled him because it encompassed 'the isle of Angelsea [*sic*], the ancient Mona, where my ancestors presided over a free but uncivilized people'.[11]

Other new layers had been added to the popular perception of Caractacus and ancient Britain by the shock of the American Declaration of Independence in July 1776, the same year in which Mason's tragedy opened at Covent Garden (6 December). Those who favoured liberty for the colonies equated Caractacus with the American rebels, and the Roman army with the British military. It became possible to identify with the cause of Caractacus from many different and shifting subject positions within the British imperial system and across the Atlantic, where the play was popular.

This ideological fluidity and complexity helps explain the scale of Mason's contribution to the Celtic revival—many people of all political complexions learned everything they knew about the druids from *Caractacus*. The play inspired the foundation of a Grand Lodge of the Order of Druids at a tavern in central London, followed in 1789 by a 'Caractacan Society'.[12] John Fisher's *Masque of the Druids* was a long-running success at Covent Garden. James Boaden's chorus of bards in *Cambro-Britons* enjoyed a run in 1798 at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket: Act III Scene V, set on Snowdon, dramatizes Gray's *The Bard*. Edward I has invaded Wales, and, as a stage direction insists,

> with a hideous yell, the Bards rush to the verge of the cliffs, and with haggard forms, seen only by the glare of the torches they carry, like furies pour out their execrations upon his head, in a full chorus to the harp only.[13]

Two years later, William Sotheby published his *Cambrian Hero, or Llewelyn the Great*, which has a chorus of four druids, and as late as 1808 a balletic version of *Caractacus* was performed at Drury Lane. It opens on Mona with a chorus of harp-strumming bards, and concludes with another bardic chorus singing defiantly in the Roman forum.[14]

Throughout the Victorian period, Caractacus poems, paintings, statues, and a few musical performances, usually with druidical overtones, sporadically appeared in both England and Wales, often in public, civic locations. J.D. Browne's sculpture group 'Caractacus before Claudius Caesar' was displayed in Westminster Hall in 1844, with the rousing caption, adapted from Tacitus, 'Though you may wish to rule all, it does not follow that all will submit to slavery!'[15] An imposing statue by Irishman Constantine Panormo, 'The Liberation of Caractacus', was said to be 'expressive' and one of the most viewed of the artworks in the British section of the gallery at the Great Exhibition of 1851.[16] J.H. Foley's monumental figure of Caractacus, funded by the City of London's joint fund for art, was put on his pedestal in the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly in 1859.[17] But Caractacus did not arrive at the epicentre of the British cultural radar again until the jingoistic celebrations of the late 1890s, when Queen Victoria's diamond jubilee (1897) foregrounded both the British imperial 'achievement' in India since the Government of India Act (1858) and the 'foundation' of 'Rhodesia' (1890). In this context Edward Elgar's *Caractacus* premiered at the Leeds festival. The libretto was by Elgar's Malvern friend and neighbour Harry Arbuthnot Acworth, a passionate advocate of the 'civilizing' benefits brought to the Indians by the Raj, and retired President of Bombay. The piece, ideologically, is a transparent apologia for British global imperialism, but the location in the Malvern Hills places Caractacus' heroism in the liminal space between English and Welsh identities.[18]

Acworth was an ardent Anglican active in Conservative local politics. The son of Nathan Brindley Acworth of the East India Company, he graduated from Oxford, joined the Bar, and passed his final examination for the Civil Service in 1870. He had then spent much of his adult life working in India, first as Collector of Salt Revenue in Bombay. In 1880 he had married Anna Mary Godby, the second daughter of Col. C.V. Jenkins of the Bombay staff corps, who was Deputy Commissioner of Kangora,

Punjab: she had been born in Lahore. Their four children were all born in India.

Acworth's Indian career was successful from the outset. For his services during the 1876–8 famine he received the official thanks of the Government of India. He was promoted to the post of Under Secretary in the Finance and Revenue Departments in 1879, and in 1890 to the challenging Municipal Commissionership of Bombay. His obituary in *The Times* reports that 'he took a leading part in the suppression of the Hindu-Mohamedan riots of 1892'.[19] He also founded the 'Homeless Leper Asylum' at Masunga, Mumbai, which still bears the name 'Acworth Municipal Leprosy Hospital'. It was the first to adopt the policy of compulsory restraint of vagrant individuals suffering from leprosy.

His son Douglas followed his father to India, where he distinguished himself in 1908 during the Bazar Valley Campaign, putting down resistance from Pakhtum mountain people on the North West Frontier province of British India, and later fighting for the Indian Corps in France during World War I. He died in the influenza epidemic after the war, while his brother John died of wounds received at Passchendaele.[20]

Acworth was convinced of the superiority of Hindu culture over Islamic, and was therefore much interested in Hindu heroic Maratha ballads, of which he published a set of learned and loving verse translations much influenced by the style of Longfellow.[21] Elgar believed in his own descent from Scandinavians, and was writing a Wagner-influenced cantata; he invited his neighbour to compress and supplement Longfellow's poetic narrative about the tenth-century Norse Crusader King Olaf from *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (1896). The cantata dramatizes the conversion of Norse pagans to a muscular Christianity. But Elgar specified that the soloists, although taking the roles of individuals in the narrative as they arose, 'should be looked upon as a gathering of skalds (bards); all, in turn, take part in the narration of the Saga'.[22] Acworth's experience with traditional Indian heroic poetry will have made him appear uniquely qualified to tackle Scandinavian bardic/epic themes: a musicologist has argued that there are direct parallels between his view of Hinduism and the portrayal of the druids in both Acworth's verses and Elgar's 'orientalising' music.[23]

Two years later the second Elgar/Acworth collaboration appeared in the cantata *Caractacus*, the published version of which was dedicated, inevitably, to Queen Victoria.[24] The plot features Caractacus (King of the Trinobantes and Leader of the Confederated Britons) being driven by the Romans from his home in central southern England to the Welsh frontier. He pitches camp on the Herefordshire Beacons in the Malvern Hills. Caractacus' daughter Eigen is engaged to Orbin, a priest-minstrel invented by Acworth and Elgar. Orbin and a 'Druid Maiden' warn Caractacus against facing the Romans in open battle, but the Arch-Druid deceives Caractacus into advancing. The treacherous druids curse Orbin, who leaves to join the British fighting in eastern England. Caractacus' men are routed, and Eigen and her maidens witness them return. Caractacus, Eigen, and Orbin are betrayed to the Romans. But the last scene, in Rome, sees Caractacus, Orbin, and Eigen being released and granted an honorific residence in Rome because Claudius is so impressed by Caractacus' courage. The three Britons sing in thanks to Claudius, 'Grace from the Roman! Peace and rest are ours, / Freedom is lost, but rest and peace remain; / Britain, farewell!'[25] Ideologically, the courage, even if primitive, of the early Britons is fused with the global 'civilization' of the Roman imperial administration in a perfect expression of the national self-image being fostered across the United Kingdom.

The *Caractacus* of Elgar and Acworth, with its druids from around the Anglo-Welsh border, and its exploration of the relationship of a brave little country to a mighty imperial conqueror capable of clemency, swiftly attracted interest in Wales. At the 1902 Gwent Chair Eisteddfod in Rhymney, the test piece in the 'marching song' category in the Brass Band competition, won jointly by the Great Western and Cory Workman's bands, was a march from *Caractacus*.[26] The most famous Welsh composer of the day, Dr Joseph Parry, was almost certainly prompted by the Elgar/Acworth cantata to write a four-part *Caractacus: A Choral Ballad*, which climaxed with a solo in F major for Claudius and full chorus, 'Free Prince Caradoc, the Briton brave!'[27] But it was a stage play in Welsh by Beriah Gwynfe Evans, performed at a school in Abergele in 1904, which inaugurated the Edwardian tradition of theatrical performances starring Caractacus. Evans saw Caractacus as fundamentally Welsh, rather than an incoming East Briton who took on leadership of the Silures, and required not only him but all the other Britons and even Romans to speak Welsh.

This procedure, drawing on a long history (covered elsewhere in this volume) of conflating the Welsh with the ancient Britons, decisively identified the Caractacus of ancient historians as the birthright of Welsh people in Wales.

Evans, born in Nant-y-glo, in 1848, began his career as a teacher who agitated for the use and teaching of Welsh in schools,[28] and in 1885 founded the Society for the Utilization of the Welsh Language.[29] A Congregationalist, he was intent upon dispelling the anti-theatrical prejudices which still prevented drama from being enjoyed in many parts of Wales, and shrewdly saw that patriotic readings of national history might be more acceptable than more frivolous content. He persuaded the organizers of the Llanberis Eisteddfod in 1879 to allow him to compete with his history play *Owain Glyndŵr*, and it won the prize, thus providing the first serious impetus to the dramatic movement in Wales and securing his lifelong membership of the Gorsedd. He has been described by M. Wynn Thomas's study of the forging of Welsh national identity between 1890 and 1914 as a 'vapid historical dramatist', but focusing on the arguable aesthetic demerits of his plays is not useful where drama has such a palpable ideological influence as, it will be seen, was exerted by Evans' *Caractacus*.[30] The same play, along with a much later version of his *Owain Glyndŵr*, was later revived to be enacted in Caernarfon in the course of the celebrations of the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1911.[31]

Evans subsequently became a journalist who has been described as 'omnipresent' on the Welsh cultural scene until his death in 1927. In 1892 he arrived in Caernarfon as managing editor of the Welsh National Press Co., which published *Y Genedl Gymreig* and *The North Wales Observer*. Here he developed his already-strong relationship with David Lloyd George, who was heavily involved with these newspapers: he later wrote a biography of his favourite politician, *The Life Romance of Lloyd George* (1915), published simultaneously in Welsh as *Rhamant Bywyd Lloyd George*.[32] His journalism, as a prominent member of the Cymru Fydd movement, was marked by a passionate commitment to Welsh nationalism and self-government but allied with a commitment to the British imperial mission.

As a prominent local journalist, in 1904 Evans was in a position to ensure that a great deal of publicity was devoted to the four pioneering performances of his new play *Caractacus* or *Caradog* by the pupils of Abergele County School, the last transferring from the school hall to the Public Hall in Colwyn Bay. After the performances, the Caernarfon paper *The Welsh Leader A Weekly Record of Education and Local Government in Wales* published a special commemorative issue, almost certainly written by Evans himself, which was then reprinted as an entirely independent volume resplendent with photographs of the performance, taken by 'Mr T. Wills Jones of Rhyl', and a portrait of Evans as its frontispiece.[33] It includes an interview with the Head Master, Mr Jeremiah Williams M.A. He explained that he wanted to engage his pupils in a more challenging and interesting Christmas entertainment than the traditional concert or semi-performance of scenes from Shakespeare. He decided to be adventurous and actually stage a complete play connected with Welsh history, because his school was keen 'to foster an interest in Welsh History and Literature, and we are doing all that is possible to develop the school on Welsh National lines'.[34] Unsurprisingly, given the history of anti-theatricalism in Wales, he failed to find a suitable text until he met Beriah Evans, whose Welsh-language drama *Llewelyn ein Llyw Olaf* had recently been performed at the Princes' Theatre in Llandudno. Evans had explained that 'he was writing a whole series of Welsh Historical Plays on characters from Caradog to Harri Tudor', and that *Caractacus*, which featured 'a Musical Scene with original music specially composed by Mr J.T. Rees, Mus. Bac. of Aberystwyth could be got ready in a month's time'.[35]

The commemorative volume is designed to encourage other schools to follow suit by listing the advantages. Besides those five spectacular photographs, it includes interviews with the music mistress in charge of training the chorus, choreographical diagrams, and advice on the creation of costumes and scenery. The Head Master proudly remarks that his pupils have received invitations to perform the play at Liverpool, Porthmadog, Caernarfon, Bangor, Denbigh, Rhyl, and Ruthin. The experience had increased his pupils' interest in the history of Wales, but had also increased the standard of intelligence: 'There is a new zest, not only in historical, but in other studies. It is as though their outlook had been suddenly broadened, and their intelligent appreciation of facts quickened.' This improvement in knowledge base and cognitive skills had applied not

only to the lucky performers, but to all the other pupils as well. Then Williams introduced a telling martial simile to explain the ideological potency of participation in patriotic theatricals at an impressionable age:

> Just as a new recruit enters his first campaign a raw lad and comes out a man, so our pupils, many of them, have suddenly sprung from being mere school children to the position of brightly intelligent youths and maidens … The lessons of patriotism, of loyalty, of truthfulness, of mutual duties and responsibilities, are insensibly but most effectively inculcated.[36]

Ten years later, this metaphorically recruited generation of children was to be asked by the British government, in which Lloyd George was the most eloquent advocate of war, to offer themselves up to the recruiting officer in reality.

There is no doubt that Evans was convinced that the creation of a new tradition of Welsh historical drama held exceptional educational promise as well as being a useful instrument in the inculcation of patriotism. He was also aware that a country with no experience of fully staged amateur theatre might find the prospect of putting on a play intimidating. The Head Master insists that staging such a performance was far less difficult than he had anticipated: he believed that nine out of ten County Schools in Wales, and ‘scores’ of Literary and Dramatic Societies, would be up to the challenge. He had himself been invited to arrange a repeat performance before HRH Princess Louise (the King’s eldest daughter).[37]

Sadly I do not read Welsh, and am most grateful to Rhys Kaminski-Jones for reading the text and supplying the summary of the play’s seven scenes, with select quotations, published as Appendix I in this volume. The sub-plots are quite complicated. They include the scheme of Vellocatus, weapon-bearer to King Venutius of the Brigantes, to seduce his master’s wife and betray Britain to the Romans. There is romantic interest in two inter-cultural love affairs. Claudius’ daughter Genwissa, who has been accompanying the Roman army on its British campaign, falls for Caradog’s brother Afarwy, while Caradog’s daughter Gwladys is destined to marry a Roman officer named Pudens.

But there is also a good deal of martial action and a suspenseful suggestion of semi-continuous fighting between Britons and their Roman invaders offstage. The Emperor Claudius himself appears on stage as early as Scene I, set in an English forest, when he is persuaded against facing

the Britons in immediate battle. Caradog appears in Scene II to regret that the Britons are in retreat. In Scene III, Gwladys saves the captured Roman ambassador Pudens, who works on behalf of the General Ostorius, from being tortured by Britons.

But in Scene IV, we arrive in Wales at ‘Caradog’s Camp in the Country of the Silures’. Here there is an important dialogue between Caradog and Pudens about the political situation. Amongst the British chiefs there are many who were once favourable to Roman involvement in their affairs, but they have all become followers of Caradog, determined to remain free of Rome and retain absolute sovereignty. After a long speech in which Caradog emphasizes the strength of the British fastnesses in Snowdon and Anglesey, his loyal Britons sing a patriotic song with distinct echoes of ‘Rule Britannia’:

> *Na! Na! Prydain ddywed na!*
> *Prydain ni fydd gaeth! Na! Na!*
> *Dewrion Prydain wnant eu rhan!*
> *Prydain saif o blaid y gwan!*
> *Na! Na! Prydain ddywed Na!*
> *Dewr Brydeinwyr nid ant byth yn gaeth i neb!*
>
> No! No! Britain answers no!
> Britain will not be enslaved! No! No!
> Britain’s heroes will play their part!
> Britain stands on behalf of the weak!
> No! No! Britain answers No!
> Brave Britons never shall be slaves to anyone![38]

The most spectacular scene is V, in a ‘Druidic circle in the centre of a forest’, and, like Mason’s *Caractacus*, it puts the goddess Andraste at the centre of the Britons’ religion. A procession, dances, and hymns precede the dramatic selection of Caradog’s daughter as willing sacrificial offering. She is rescued from the altar by Pudens.

Scene VI returns us to England, where Caradog is betrayed, albeit reluctantly by his cousin Aregwedd under the influence of the evil Vellocatus. And the final Scene VII opens on the crowded Field of Mars in Rome, where Claudius and Agrippina receive the captives and spoils from

Britain. Caradog refuses to kneel before Claudius, delivers a paraphrase of his famous speech from Tacitus' *Annals* 12.37 and is freed, while the treacherous Vellocatus and Aregwedd are condemned.

It should be clear from the above summary that the accounts of Tacitus and Dio are major ingredients in Evans' play: they provide foundations for the plot, the names of certain characters (e.g. the Roman general Ostoriws/Ostorius), insights into Caractacus' motivations, and source material for his heroic speeches. However, Evans did not depend upon them entirely, and the alterations he made were not purely the product of his imagination. Take, for instance, Caradog's frustrated outcry in Scene II: '*O na chawn fraich Caswallon, a doethineb Lludd, / A llwyddiant Brutus!*' ('O might I not have Caswallon's arm, and Lludd's wisdom, / And the success of Brutus!')[39] The British ancestors invoked here are those found in medieval Welsh histories and genealogies, from the semi-historical Caswallon/Cassivellaunus to the legendary Trojan Brutus;[40] their presence in Evans' play, alongside allusions to the *Annals*, gives them an unexpected level of legitimacy in a text written for twentieth-century schoolchildren.

By the end of the nineteenth century, Caractacus had become an important focus for this kind of attempt to reconcile Celtic and Classical sources in Welsh history. For instance, the influential forger Iolo Morganwg (1747–1826) produced a body of pseudo-ancient lore identifying Caractacus with the character Caradoc fab Brân in the Mabinogi; this made him both the son of Bendigeidfran (Bran the Blessed), and instrumental in the conversion of the ancient Britons to Christianity. Beriah Evans did not swallow the story wholesale, but Iolo's legacy is nevertheless legible in his play, most notably in the name of the character Aregwedd—this is a purely Celtic alternative for Cartismandua, inserted by Iolo into one of his eighteenth-century forgeries.[41] In preferring this name from an (apparently) Celtic text to one endorsed by Classical historians, Evans signals that his play is not merely reproducing a Roman story in Welsh, but is instead blending Celtic and Classical traditions, with neither one privileged to the exclusion of the other.[42]

Two years after the success of the Abergele school play, the Elgar/Acworth cantata itself arrived triumphantly at the centre of Welsh people's celebration of their national self-definition. In 1906, Caractacus

provided the two highlights of the Royal National Eisteddfod, held as often at Caernarfon, in the enormous pavilion which had been built for the purpose in 1877. For the first time in Eisteddfod history, the programme included a spoken drama, Evans' Welsh-language *Caractacus* under a variant name, *Pendragon Prydain*. This title was presumably used to distinguish it from Elgar's *Caractacus*, an evening concert performance of which took place at the festival's climax. The cantata featured a specially convened 270-strong festival chorus consisting entirely of local townspeople, well-known Welsh soloists, and the band of the Portsmouth Royal Marines Light Infantry. It 'gave very great satisfaction to the vast audience assembled'.[43]

A long article in the *North Wales Express* is sensitive to the ambiguity surrounding Caractacus' national affiliation. It addresses the potential problem that Elgar's *Caractacus* 'is an English work, of course', and notes that 'curiously … both the first Welsh drama to be connected with the Eisteddfod and the chief choral work this year treated of the same hero'. But the writer concludes that Elgar's cantata was as welcome as Beriah's drama by commenting that 'there was no Cymro in last evening's performance who did not feel that the music was instinct with that undefinable greatness associated in his mind with his country's glorious though pathetic past. Sir Edward Elgar has commenced his invasion of musical Wales'. He particularly applauds Elgar's version for its imaginative reference to a future 'potent Britain' which will rise 'in majesty' to sway 'Empires Caesar never knew'.[44]

The triumph of the Caractacus story at the 1906 Eisteddfod in both spoken drama and sung cantata inspired a decade of amateur performances in schools and town halls across Wales. In addition to those by Joseph Parry, Elgar/Acworth, and Evans, a fourth, more light-hearted work, combining speech and song with attractive dance sequences and comic interludes, had certainly become available by 1910. It seems swiftly to have become the most frequent choice for performance (it was shorter, in English, and made fewer demands on its performers than the long set-piece orations of Evans' more portentous work): its published version is entitled *Caractacus. A Juvenile Operetta for Boys and Girls and Infants.* The music was by George G. Lewis and Herbert Longhurst, and the libretto by H.E. Turner.[45] This opens with a scene in the Roman forum, with a chorus of slaves. Emperor Claudius and Empress Agrippina decide to

invade Britain, and there is a procession of Roman soldiers. The action then moves to Britain, where there is an idyllic scene of village life including a maypole dance and games. Caractacus' wife Rotha and her mother Cartismandua are introduced, followed by Claudius and his aide-de-camp Bericus. There is a dance of British warriors, painted in woad and wielding axes and shields. Two strolling players arrive and provide comic relief, before the chorus of druids sings a psalm and the Arch-Druid prays. But suddenly there is a thunderstorm and the Romans attack. During the battle, Caractacus disappears and his wife Rotha desperately searches for him. Cartismandua has betrayed Caractacus. The scene then returns to Rome and the triumphal procession in which Caractacus and Rotha are led as captives before being dramatically released. The show ends with a final chorus in praise of the Fire God.

The collection of digitized newspapers held at the National Library of Wales yields up evidence of a substantial number of other Caractacus performances and productions, and despite the predominance of the Lewis/Longhurst/Turner operetta when the work is actually specified, it is not otherwise always possible to identify which one—Elgar/Acworth, Parry, Evans, or the operetta—was performed. It is possible that in practice there were new hybrid versions which transferred especially popular tunes or speeches from one version to another or rewrote them entirely. For example, in March 1909, the Kidwelly United Juvenile Choir performed an unspecified work described as 'the popular cantata "Caractacus"' to packed audiences, two nights running, in the Town Hall. There were costumes and scenery and the acting received commendation. In particular, some Kidwelly boys relished the opportunity to enact martial violence: 'Masters John Cydwel Davies and Harold Reynolds, as Roman soldiers, and Melvill White and Tudor Evans, as British soldiers, gave splendid representations of the martial ardour of those early days.'[46]

Perhaps prompted by a much-lauded rendition of the Elgar/Acworth cantata at the London National Eisteddfod of 1909,[47] or by the prominent position given to the story of Caractacus, as the opening episode of the ambitious National Pageant of Wales staged in Cardiff's Sophia Gardens in the summer of the same year,[48] the floodgates of Caractacus performances were flung wide open in 1910. The first documented staging of the Lewis/Longhurst/Turner operetta took place at the Judge's Hall, Trealaw in March 1910: it was sung by the Juvenile Choir of Salem,

Llwynypia.[49] It was soon followed by a performance of the same work by the Pisgah Juvenile Choral Society at Bryndu School: ‘All the little ones were tastefully dressed, and did their singing in a manner that showed a thorough training.’ The proceeds were in aid of the Pisgah Baptist Church.[50] Not to be outdone, the Tabernacle Juvenile Choir of the Welsh Congregational Church Band of Hope performed the operetta during the same month, at the Tabernacle Chapel in Barry Docks. It was repeated soon afterwards at the Masonic Hall, Barry, when the proceeds were handed over to the Institute of the British and Foreign Sailors’ Society (Barry Docks branch). ‘Between the acts, Mr W. W. Marshall, port missionary to the British and Foreign Sailors’ Society, proposed a vote of thanks to the choir, and those who assisted at the performance.’[51] ‘Roman soldiers and juvenile Britons sang and drilled, recited, gesticulated, and even fought with true histrionic earnestness.’[52]

The next documented performance of the operetta followed in April. It took place in the Pembrokeshire Masonic Hall, and featured no fewer than fifty local people drawn from the teachers and pupils of the St Catherine’s Sunday School and Bible Class.[53] The hilarity of the strolling players Gip and Topsy ‘evoked roars of laughter, and their witticisms and actions quite overcame the audience’.[54] In May 1910, the children of Milford Haven Parish Church Bible Class and adults of the Teachers’ Operatic Society combined in the Masonic Hall at Haverford West to produce the operetta. The battle scene was highly commended as ‘truly realistic. The glittering spears of the ill-trained Britons are poor defence against the short deadly swords of the Roman invaders, and many British fall dead on the plain’.[55] By popular demand, the production was revived later in the year, when the proceeds were donated to the St Mary’s Young Men’s Institute.[56]

It is undeniable that there was strong feeling amongst the miners of the Rhondda during the Tonypandy riots of 1910 and 1911, especially after Winston Churchill, as Home Secretary, sent in the British army to support the police against the unrest. This must have meant the militarism of the Caractacus performances struck more ambivalent chords in some less Anglophile members of the audiences.[57] Yet 1911 undoubtedly marked the highest tide of the British Empire for Britons of all income brackets internationally. A year after passing his ‘People’s Budget’, Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had won fervent support amongst the

working classes of both Wales and England. He then masterminded both the newly crowned George V's 'Festival of Empire', when George and his wife Mary were crowned Emperor and Empress in a bizarre triumphalist pageant at Delhi, and the equally peculiar pseudo-druidical ceremony at Caernarfon Castle in which Crown Prince Edward was officially 'invested' as Prince of Wales. The triumphant fusion of Welsh indigenous and British imperial identities at this time meant that Caractacus performances in Welsh schools continued to proliferate. In late October 1913, it was the turn of the Model School, Carmarthen, to essay the operetta at the Carmarthen Assembly Rooms, where the boys who played the parts of the Roman soldiers and the Britons were commended for the fine representation of the 'very good fight'.[58] In March 1914 it was the turn of the children of Ogmore Higher Elementary School to perform the operetta twice, at the Ogmore Workmen's Hall, where the event was presided over by Alderman William Llewellyn J.P., and at the Nantymoel Workmen's Hall. The children had been prepared for learning their parts by a lecture on the deeds of Caractacus on St David's Day. The newspaper report comments on the 'educational effect' of this operetta, which was 'bound to be of immense value to the performers by giving them a clearer idea of life in Britain in the days of our ancestors, and life in Rome at the height of her glory and power'.[59]

By Empire Day 1914, nerves about the possibility of war were becoming more apparent. When the children of Swansea celebrated this event, several thousand marched in costume beneath bright sunshine on the 'Swansea Sands', singing 'Land of Hope and Glory', 'God Bless the Prince of Wales', and the 'National Anthem' as they saluted the Union Jack. At the Christ Church Infants' School in Rodney Street, children performed speeches and tableaux costumed as Britannia, Florence Nightingale with nurses and soldiers, and John Bull's children, but the boys of Terrace Road School turned to ancient history. Their pageant enacted 'the taking of Caractacus to Rome' in full historical costumes.[60]

Britain declared war on Germany on 4 August 1914. Given his political views and experience as loyal servant of the British Empire, it comes as little surprise to find Elgar's librettist Acworth, on the Welsh border that month, delivering a 'stirring lecture' on the reasons for the necessity of fighting 'Prussia' (as he still called it): Prussia had 'throughout history proved herself to be of all States the most voracious, and of all States the

least to be trusted. Greed and falsehood are writ large upon her action for many a hundred years past'.[61] And at a national level, the politician who had worked hardest to convince Britons to go to war was the Welshman often himself described as a druid, bard, and reincarnation or scion of Caractacus, David Lloyd George. Although scholars argue about the extent of his commitment to the 'moral argument' that Belgium needed to be defended against Germany, by 1911 he had become an interventionist who helped to plan the policies 'and ministerial changes that committed Britain to immediate participation in war and a continental strategy in 1914'.[62] For Lloyd George, as for most British political leaders, the important point was not Britain's possible obligations under international law to defend Belgium, but the imperative to avoid a defeat in France leading to a Europe dominated by Germany.

Once war was declared, the Caractacus performances in Wales became transparently connected with recruitment, morale, and fund-raising for the war effort. The Trecastle section of a Brecon newspaper proudly reports in January 1915 that a local youth, Private John Edwards, of the 3rd Battalion Welsh Regiment, had been seen marching at Cardiff; the journalist reports:

> Private Evans looked well in his uniform, and appeared fit to meet any number of Germans. I hear that the Recruiting Committee, appointed lately for Traianmawr parish, are doing excellent work. On Friday evening last a most successful concert was held at the old National School, Trecastle, in aid of the local Band of Hope and the Belgian Relief Fund. The room was crowded to its utmost capacity, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the entertainment.

The programme's climax consisted, inevitably, of a play called *Caractacus*, followed by the singing of all four Belgian, French, Russian, and English National Anthems.[63]

In the summer of 1915, Caractacus turns up specifically in the context of fund-raising for the war effort. The Pentrepoeth Girls' School, Morriston, had spent ten months 'engaged in knitting comforts—scarves, socks, helmets etc. for the soldiers and sailors'. They staged a special set of performances to raise 'funds to carry on the work'. They needed 'wool for making further comforts, which they intended sending to the children's fathers who were at the front. Mrs. H.D. Williams read a letter which she had received from a soldier at the front showing how the men appreciated the comforts sent to them'. The programme consisted of tableaux

representing ‘Shakespeare’s Birthday’ and ‘Empire Day’ supplemented by ‘A Ballad of the Ranks’ and a ‘Pageant of Famous Women’. But the main item on the programme was the ‘playlet’ entitled *Caractacus in Rome*.[64]

The children’s choir of Gwaun Cae Gurwen performed a work entitled *Caractacus* early in 1916.[65] There were two performances of a ‘cantata’ called *Caractacus* by the Hermon Juvenile Choir in December 1917.[66] But after conscription was imposed in 1916, and the war staggered to its gloomy conclusion, the full extent of the slaughter began to sink into the national consciousness. Predictably, the craze for Caractacus theatricals waned. None are recorded in 1918, and just one 1919 performance of the operetta is recorded in Burry Port, by the Zion Choir in the Parish Hall, in May.[67] An awareness that the Caractacus tale had less relevance to everyday life in post-war Wales seems however to have bypassed the Breconshire poet Clifford King, who in 1917 claimed to be ‘well known throughout Great Britain, India, Australasia and America by his poetical compositions’ and ‘Wales’ greatest poet to-day and England’s also’. Amongst honours conferred on him was the honorary Bardic title of ‘Rhyd-y-Godor’, by the late Archdruid of Wales, Clwydfardd.[68]

In 1920 King published his poems, which included earlier works such as a ‘Coronation Ode’ and an ‘Ode on the Investiture of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales at Carnarvon’. But these were now supplemented by the ‘Historical and Patriotic drama *Caractacus*’.[69] This had been conceived before the war ended, in 1917, and was dedicated to Lloyd George by his special and personal permission when he was still Prime Minister. King was emphatic that Caractacus was a native of Siluria in South Wales, and informs his reader that he has ‘(for alike patriotic, imperial and dramatic reasons—Indeed, as a Silurian indigene personally) modified the historically-recorded speech of Caractacus before Claudius’:[70]

> The torch I’ve lit shall ne’er extinguished be,
> But shall be handed on through centuries
> As Brythons each fall in life’s fevered race.

The drama concludes with the British National Anthem followed by one verse of *Land of My Fathers, Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*.[71]

For all King's regressive rhetoric, the story of Edwardian Welsh Caractacus performances has a tragic ending. The ancient Briton's legend was actively used as propaganda in the recruitment drive in Wales amongst the poorest, Welsh-speaking populations of the north and west of Wales. Their identity as men of 'gallant little Wales', most famously articulated in the verses quoted below, composed by two Talgarth residents, was explicitly used to foment identification with the suffering people of another 'gallant little' nation, Belgium. The entire poem, which continues to list previous battles in which Welsh soldiers have distinguished themselves by dying in the Crimean and Zulu wars, was printed in *The Brecon County Times Neath Gazette and General Advertiser* on 26 November 1914, p. 2, with the explicitly stated 'hope that [it] may be used to stimulate recruiting':

> There were gallant little Welshmen long ago,
> Such as Caesar and his stalwart warriors found:
> They could then with steady courage meet the foe,
> And for home and freedom boldly stand their ground.
> Brave Caractacus for Britain fought his best,
> And Boadicea, too, the British warrior Queen;
> Their spirit lives, though they are long at rest,
> Our love of freedom living ever green.
>
> CHORUS.
> Tis defence and not defiance,
> Tis for freedom not for fame,
> Tis on right we place reliance,
> Crying better death than shame.
> When our Country calls us forward,
> When the enemy assails,
> There are loyal hearts to answer,
> In gallant little Wales!

Yet gallant little Welshmen suffered disproportionately more fatalities in the trenches than soldiers from any other part of Britain.[72]

The ideological utility of school performances of plays and operettas featuring Caractacus is most painfully expressed in a third newspaper article reporting that staging we noted earlier, by the Banwen Council School scholars at Brynamman in June 1916, when the death toll of local men was mounting month by month. *The Amman Valley Chronicle and East Carmarthen News* for 15 June 1916 (p. 5) is full of praise for the emotional impact of the show, enhanced especially by the acting of R.J. Jones as the Arch-Druid and Miss Sally Williams as Cartismundua, who with 'a withering gaze and hatred convulsing her whole body … thwarted those who had dared to wound her pride':

> Being under the shadows of the greatest war the world has ever seen it was very timely, and gave an opportunity to compare the old methods of warring with the advanced but more destructive methods of to-day. The interpretations were so realistic, and at times so absorbing, that we were unawares borne reminiscently to the Roman times. The audiences were fairly carried back to the actual period on which the work was based, and found themselves captives within that epoch until the end … . All the weapons and addresses were the handicraft of the children and were excellently done, and proved very suitable.

Small Welsh children were still recreating ancient weapons as their elder brothers were dying in droves in the trenches of France.

One Anglo-Welsh soldier, the most overlooked of the poets of World War I, was well aware of the connection of Caractacus with the recruitment drive. The son of a Welsh-speaking printer, David Jones was the author of the searing anti-war epic *In Parenthesis*, of which I have published a detailed study elsewhere.[73] He was raised in a suburban London home. He enlisted in the 15th battalion of the Royal Welch Fusiliers, the battalion known as the London Welsh, on 2 January 1915. He was newly nineteen and had previously tried to enlist twice. The Artists' Rifles had rejected him because of insufficient chest expansion and the Welsh horse did not think it helped that he knew nothing about horses. Jones' father wrote to David Lloyd George, still Chancellor of the Exchequer, who personally ensured that the inarticulate teenaged art student could enlist and enter training at Llandudno.[74]

Jones never recovered from his experience fighting at Mametz Wood,[75] one of the most brutal engagements of the war. His division suffered a staggering four thousand casualties. Robert Graves also fought in the battle, the aftermath of which he described immediately afterwards: 'It was full of dead Prussian Guards, big men, and dead Royal Welch Fusiliers

and South Wales Borderers, little men.'[76] The centrepiece of *In Parenthesis*, one of the very few World War I poems by a common soldier fighting alongside other working-class privates, rather than by poets of officer rank, is the boast of Dai Greatcoat. This is Jones' homage to the 'flyting' speech of Diomedes to Glaucus in *Iliad* book 6, but it is also a bitter, ironic salute to Lloyd George. Dai proclaims his qualifications for the status of warrior, citing the participation of himself and his forefathers in the entire history of biblical and European warfare, mingling his Hebrew, Classical, and Welsh historical narratives with dizzying abandon. This rhetorical display is bound up with Jones' identity as a man who suffered several nervous breakdowns as a result of shell-shock, but also as an Anglo-Welshman fighting in the Welsh Fusiliers. They had gone to war to die or to witness catastrophic fatalities alongside other men, both Londoners of Welsh descent and Welshmen, who bore together in their bodies 'the genuine tradition of the Island of Britain'. Such men, concludes Jones, existed long before even the Caractacus of ancient history ever was alive himself.[77]

Edith Hall, *British Imperialist and/or Avatar of Welshness?: Caractacus Performances in the Long Nineteenth Century* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0008

[1] *The London Kelt* (29 February 1896) 11. Another version of this chapter has been published in Hall and Stead (2020) 254–68.

[2] 'End of the Eisteddfod', *South Wales Daily News* (14 July 1894) 5–6. The article is adorned by a portrait sketch of the firebrand young politician.

[3] 'End of the Eisteddfod', *South Wales Daily News* (14 July 1894) 6.

[4] *The Amman Valley Chronicle and East Carmarthen News* (13 July 1916) 3.

[5] Andrews (1991).

[6] See Hall and Vasunia (2010).

[7] Mason (1796) 84.

[8] See further the detailed account in Hall and Macintosh (2005) ch. 7.

[9] See Hall (2010) 36–7.

[10] See Fynes (1998).

[11] Quoted in Cannon (1970) vol. I, 199. For further discussion of Mason and Mona/Anglesey more generally, see Constantine in this volume, in particular 125–7.

[12] Snyder (1923) 238, 165, 157, 161.

[13] See Snyder (1923) 11; Boaden (1798).

[14] Anon. (1808) 10, 12, 26.

[15] *Illustrated London News* (13 July 1844) 21 with fig.

[16] *Illustrated London News* (11 October 1851) 'Supplement', n. pag., with fig.

[17] *Illustrated London News* (13 August 1859) 146 with fig.

[18] McGuire (2007).

[19] *The Times* (30 May 1933) 21.

[20] See Douglas Acworth's obituary in *The Malvern News* (15 February 1919): 'He was not a "bookish" man, but a most earnest student of his profession and of historical and military literature.'

[21] Acworth (1894).

[22] Quoted in Moore (1984) 203.

[23] Upperton (2007) especially 169–73.

[24] Elgar (1898).

[25] Elgar (1898) 72.

[26] *The Pontypridd Chronicle and Workman's News* (24 May 1902) 6.

[27] *Weekly Mail* (30 August 1902) 8. Joseph Parry, who had been sent down the Merthyr Tydfil mines at the age of eight, became a hugely successful composer after emigrating to Pennsylvania in 1854. He returned to the UK in 1868, took degrees in Music, and became a distinguished academic. His works include the evergreen song *Myfanwy* (1875) and the first Welsh opera, *Blodwen* (1878).

[28] See Evans (1892).

[29] K. Morgan (1981) 95–6.

[30] Thomas (2016) 25.

[31] Thomas (2016) 25.

[32] See Thomas (2016) 45–74.

[33] Anon. (1904). The photographs opposite pages 4, 8, 12, 17, and 24 are respectively captioned 'THE RESCUE OF CLAUDIA BY PRINCE ARVIRAGUS', 'PUDENS BRINGS OSTORIUS'S MESSAGE TO CARACTACUS', 'THE SACRIFICE IN THE DRUIDIC TEMPLE', 'THE BETRAYAL—CARACTACUS CURSES CARTISMANDUA', and 'CARACTACUS BEFORE CAESAR—THE TRAITOR'S DOOM (FINAL SCENE)'.

[34] Anon. (1904) 4.

[35] Anon. (1904) 5.

[36] Anon. (1904) 5–6.

[37] Anon. (1904) 7.

[38] Anon. (1904) 30.

[39] Evans (1904) 14.

[40] For the significance of these names, see Koch (2006).

[41] For the 'private mythology' woven by Iolo around Caradoc/Caractacus, Brân, and Aregwedd, see Bromwich (1968) 310, 331–2.

[42] For the comparable significance of Caractacus' daughter Gwladys, and her purported link to Claudia Rufina in Martial's *Epigrams* 11.53, see Vandrei (2016).

[43] Anon. (1906) 627–8.

[44] '"Caractacus". A Splendid Performance', *The North Wales Express* (24 August 1906) 5: 'Mr O. M. Edwards, M.A., Lincoln College, Oxford, presided, and was warmly received. It goes without saying that he spoke in Welsh, and of Welsh. He said that it was worth their while to keep alive the Welsh language if a song had never been sung in it, or if it had no literature, because there was poetry in its words … The Eisteddfod should make its influence fall upon other institutions—the elementary schools, and the secondary schools, and the university colleges, if he might venture to name them, and also upon the University itself, so that the dry bones might live … They had learnt to look upon the Eisteddfod as an institution that reflected the life and progress of Wales. They expected something from the Carnarvon Eisteddfod. It had started with a drama, and it was going to end with something that no other Eisteddfod had known.'

[45] The earliest published version of the operetta I have been able to track is Turner, Longhurst, and Lewis (1924).

[46] 'Kidwelly Notes', *The Carmarthen Weekly Reporter* (12 March 1909) 3. See also *The Llanelly Mercury and South Wales Advertiser* (4 March 1909) 4.

[47] *The Cardiff Times* (10 April 1909) 9.

[48] See Edwards (2009) 9, 113–17 with the photographs of 'Caradoc' played by Mr Goodwin Preece and the 'Silurian warriors and their wives' reproduced on pp. 116 and 117 respectively.

[49] *Rhondda Leader Maesteg Garw and Ogmore Telegraph* (19 March 1910) 1.

[50] 'Kenfig Hill', *The Glamorgan Gazette* (4 March 1910) 8.

[51] *Barry Dock News* (15 April 1910) 5.

[52] *Barry Herald* (18 March 1910) 3.

[53] *The Pembroke County Guardian and Cardigan Reporter* (22 April 1910) 8.

[54] *The Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (22 April 1910) 3.

[55] '"Caractacus". A splendid performance. Historical operetta at Haverford West', *Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph and General Weekly Reporter for the Counties of Pembroke Cardigan Carmarthen Glamorgan and the Rest of South Wales* (1 June 1910) 2.

[56] *Haverfordwest and Milford Haven Telegraph and General Weekly Reporter for the Counties of Pembroke Cardigan Carmarthen Glamorgan and the Rest of South Wales* (28 September 1910) 3.

[57] See Evans and Maddox (2010).

[58] *The Carmarthen Weekly Reporter* (7 November 1913) 5.

[59] *The Glamorgan Gazette* (3 April 1914) 3.

[60] *The Cambria Daily Leader* (22 May 1914) 1. Many Caractacuses must have appeared in pageants across Britain during these years: in the Cheltenham pageant—as reported in 'Gloucestershire's History in Living Pictures', *Illustrated London News* Issue 3612 (11 July 1908) 43—the procession was led by a man dressed up as Caractacus.

[61] Backhouse (2015): ‘Newspapers reported on a stirring lecture given by Mr A H Acworth in August 1914. Such a talk was necessary as most people were quite unaware of the causes of the war. He gave the historical explanations for the tensions between the European empires, in particular where they boiled over in the Balkans.’

[62] Gilbert (1985) 865.

[63] *The Brecon County Times Neath Gazette and General Advertiser for the Counties of Brecon Carmarthen Radnor Monmouth Glamorgan Cardigan Montgomery Hereford* (21 January 1915) 4.

[64] *The Cambria Daily Leader* (24 June 1915) 4.

[65] *The Amman Valley Chronicle and East Carmarthen News* (27 January 1916) 2.

[66] *The Glamorgan Gazette* (21 December 1917) 4.

[67] *The Cambria Daily Leader* (28 May 1919) 5.

[68] ‘Hay’s poet’, *The Brecon Radnor Express Carmarthen and Swansea Valley Gazette and Brynmawr District Advertiser* (14 June 1917) 2.

[69] King (1920) vol. 3, 283–389.

[70] King (1920) vol. 3, 289.

[71] King (1920) vol. 3, 389.

[72] See Llwyd (2008).

[73] Hall (2018).

[74] Hyne (1995) 11. On Lloyd George and Welsh recruitment, see Price (2006) 197–201.

[75] The authoritative study of Jones’ military experiences is now Dilworth (2012).

[76] Graves (1929) 175.

[77] Jones (2014 [1937]) ‘Preface’, x. I would like to record my thanks to Rhys Kaminski-Jones for all his very hard work on improving this article. Henry Stead helped me with some of the primary research in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth when we went on a joint research trip. I am also most grateful to Lloyd Llewelyn-Jones and especially to Chris Pelling for reading an earlier draft and supplying many helpful insights and comments.

9

Moderns of the Past, Moderns of the Future

George Sigerson's Celtic-Romans in Ireland, 1897–1922

Arabella Currie

> *What idea of the state, what substitute for that of the toga'd race that ruled the world, will serve our immediate purpose here in Ireland?*
>
> W.B. Yeats[1]

> *PAUL: This earth is mine, not Britain's, nor Rome's. Mine.*
>
> Frank McGuinness[2]

Introduction

In 1907, George Sigerson declared that the Irish were 'the Moderns of the Past'. Perhaps, he suggested, 'they are also fated to be the Moderns of the Future'.[3] This chapter will explore Sigerson's argument that Celtic–Roman relations were not only central to this ancient Irish 'modernity,' but might also enable a similarly advanced Irishness to reappear in the future. It will therefore complement the volume's focus on Celtic–Classical interactions within the notion of Britishness, by examining the

role of such a dialogue in Ireland's attempts to *extricate* itself from the British Empire, and by emphasizing the part that Irish scholars, poets, and translators like Sigerson have played in shaping Celtic, Roman, and British identities.

Sigerson's life is remarkable for its variety. Born in County Tyrone in 1836 and educated in Paris, Galway, and Cork, he was a poet, translator, historian, and neurologist. He served as medical commissioner during the 1879 famine, and campaigned for the rights of political prisoners, for medical provision in rural communities, and for improvements in the treatment of mental health. 'Dublin's first neurologist', he was a close friend of the trailblazer of neurology and psychology, Jean-Martin Charcot (through whom he may have met Freud), and translated his lectures into English.[4] He was a practising doctor in Dublin, refusing payment if he thought the patient could not afford their treatment. In the 1870s, he was consulted by Gladstone's government on the 'Land Question', and wrote books on the history of land tenure and Irish parliamentary politics. He was Professor of Zoology and Botany at the Catholic University of Ireland —impressing Darwin with a paper on 'a protomorphic phyllo-type'—and published theories about the ambidexterity of early man, the 'physiological psychology' of Cú Chulainn, and the sense perceptions of different ancient cultures.[5] In 1911, he donated the trophy for the first intervarsity Gaelic football tournament, organized to consolidate the nascent National University—it is still called the Sigerson Cup—and in 1922 he was elected a Senator of the Irish Free State, chairing its first meeting. He died in 1925.[6]

With this wide span of activity, Sigerson was among the most important figures in the Irish Revival, the movement that sought 'to express the Irish imagination in an Irish way' and so gain cultural or political independence for Ireland.[7] Sigerson gave the inaugural lecture of the National Literary Society in 1892, became its President the following year, and hosted key Revivalists at his house in Dublin, including Maud Gonne, Stephen MacKenna, and Roger Casement. His first collection of translations of Irish poetry was published in 1860 and was seen to mark 'the beginning of the Celtic Revival'.[8] It reveals a prophetic awareness of what would become one of the most interesting aspects of the movement —and part of what makes the period especially apposite to the concerns of

this volume—that, as Declan Kiberd explains, the cultural creation of Irish national identity would precede, influence, and even enable 'the political revolution that followed.'[9] 'There are few things which have more power over the human mind than song', Sigerson argued, and so the translator of Ireland's literary tradition should assume some responsibility for *creating* that tradition, particularly in the eyes of 'its youth'.[10]

As Sigerson predicted, his translations had a lasting influence on what Kiberd has termed the 'modernizing élite of 1916', and Lyons and Foster the 'revolutionary generation'.[11]Alice Milligan dedicated her *Hero Lays*, published 'at the request of some exiles in the Argentine republic', to Sigerson, while Thomas MacDonagh addressed him as 'master' in a collection of essays published posthumously in 1916, after he had been executed by the British government.[12] Nevertheless, as James McGeachie points out, Sigerson is given only 'a walk-on part' in most studies of the Revival.[13] Partly because of the breadth of his ideas, which prevents him slotting easily into one discipline or approach, he remains only a well-known name in the cast list of the Revival, with his work seldom studied in detail and his part in the story of the Irish reception of Classics entirely overlooked. This chapter aims to restore the role played by Celtic–Roman relations, and specifically Celtic–Roman influences, in the work of this important figure, whose career overlapped with the critical years of the Irish Revival, and whose reach stretched into almost all its aspects—politics, history, literature, language, medicine, education, and the restoration of Gaelic sports.

A vital question throughout this decisive period was how to calibrate Ireland's relationship, or lack of relationship, with ancient Rome alongside its relationship with Britain. As Ireland sought to position itself away from Britain, did that imply it had to distance itself from Rome, given the link between the two as imperial powers, and given Britain's own purloining of Roman imperial rhetoric to characterize and justify its own mission? To put it another way, if to be Celtic in the Revival was to move away from Britain and look west towards the Atlantic, creating an 'alternative geography of Europe's Celtic fringes', as John Brannigan explains, then how could that new Atlantic locus of identity be mapped onto the Mediterranean, particularly when much of that Mediterranean had already apparently been claimed by Britain?[14]

Through a close study of two of Sigerson's theories—one published in 1897, the other in 1922—this chapter argues that Sigerson constructs a pioneering pattern of Celtic–Roman–British alignment, one that contributes both a refiguring of the direction of Celtic–Roman influence, and a ground-breaking method of reading texts across Celtic and Classical traditions. On the face of it, and according to the current consensus on nationalist Ireland's relationship with Rome, to be an Irish Celt in the Revival was to be emphatically non-Roman, as a means to forge an independent identity, and as a way of being non-British. Sigerson, however, makes the interaction between Celt and Roman work as part of his nationalist—and postcolonial—project.[15] For Sigerson, the very closeness of Roman and Celtic is what will allow the true, independent nationality of Ireland finally to come into its own, in marked distinction from the British Empire.[16]

Cicero, Divitiacus, and Sedulius

The most prominent of Sigerson's literary endeavours was his collection of translations, *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, first published in 1897 and enlarged in 1907. This book cemented the association between 'the name Dr George Sigerson' and 'the Celtic literature of Ireland'.[17] It was 'in the hands of all our young writers', and made 'a contribution to the … Celtic Revival the importance of which it would be difficult to over-estimate'.[18] Taken as a whole, it constitutes, as Gregory Schirmer notes, 'a kind of literary history', with translations stretching from the lays of the Milesian invaders through to eighteenth-century patriotic poetry.[19] It also reveals something of the history of Irish textual criticism, profiting from the philological advances of the 1890s by incorporating very recent texts such as Meyer's *Vision of Mac Conglinne* (1892) and *The Voyage of Bran* (1895), and so bringing 'the antiquarian enterprise of translation' up to date.[20]

'May not a buried literature have claims upon our attention?' Sigerson asks in the introduction to this landmark collection, presenting his 'Celtic' originals as remnants of Roman suppression: 'the Romans', he described, 'went over the regions they subjugated, like the sands of Sahara over

meadows'. (*Bards* 17) He then advocates two adjustments to the Roman model of their conquered, buried territory. First, replacing the term 'barbarian' with the equally suggestive 'Free Nations' and, second, acknowledging that the distinction between Roman and barbarian may not be so impassable as it appears, in terms both of characterization and of cultural contact. 'It is impossible', he writes,

> to suppose that these Free Nations had no lays or legends which could have been preserved, and it is equally impossible to believe that there was no diffusion of knowledge between the classic and the non-classic worlds. (*Bards* 17–18)

He points to Graeco–Celtic contact at Marseilles, for example, the testimony of Herodotus, Aristotle, and Pytheas on the 'Celts,' the Celtic invasion of Rome, and the sack of Delphi. 'Their frontiers', he writes, 'were not rigid.' (*Bards* 18) He then forges on from the 'region of facts' to 'a supposition which may seem bold', arguing that Cicero was directly influenced in his poetry by the poetry of a Celt, specifically, by the work of 'the Chief Druid of the Aedui, Divitiacus', with whom he was 'personally acquainted in Rome'.[21] (*Bards* 19)

Sigerson's final work, published in 1922, developed this idea of interaction between the 'classic and the non-classic worlds', putting forward a theory just as 'bold' as his theory about Cicero and the druid. The book comprised a translation—the first into English, with lengthy introduction, notes, and appendices—of part of Sedulius' *Carmen Paschale*, entitled *The Easter Song: Being the First Epic of Christendom.* In an appendix, Sigerson argued for the existence of 'two great Schools of Versification'. One, the Graeco-Roman, was 'characterised by its dominant principle of Time-measure', and the other, the Celtic, was distinguished 'by its dominant principle of sound-echo or rime'. 'Generally speaking', he argued, 'the Greco-Romans were or became rime-deaf, and the Celts more or less Time-dull'.[22] He then considered the possibility of cross-pollination between 'the Time-school and the Rime-school'—between 'the classic and the non-classic'—and particularly between the Celtic and the Roman. 'Was there any means of contact between them', Sigerson asked, 'or any possibility of the Celtic influencing the Latin verse?' (*ES* 265) As in 1897, he argued that there was a distinct possibility of such contact, claiming that the author of this highly influential, Late-Antique biblical epic about the Fall, written in

dactylic hexameters and modelled on Virgil's *Aeneid*, was Irish. 'The nationality of Sedulius has been questioned', Sigerson explains in the preface. But now, thanks to his theory, 'a secret of centuries has been revealed, and Ireland is shown to have produced an Epic Poem—the First of Christendom'. (*ES* vi)

Sigerson calculated that an inclination to believe Classical primacy in all things would discredit these ideas about Celtic influence on the Latin world, predicting that ingrained beliefs about Classical power would work against the idea of the Celt having any authority over the Classical. In resistance, he argues for a more reciprocal Celtic–Classical relationship, based on the Celtic–Roman interactions between Sedulius as Irishman and as Latin poet, and between Cicero and Divitiacus:

> Now as Cicero the philosopher studied druid rites, is it not probable that Cicero the poet studied bardic methods? His opportunity was at hand, in the person of an intelligent expert; and his inquiring mind was not likely to stop short when there was question of exploring a new system of verse-structure. Why should not he … have caused divers Celtic poems to be translated for him? … I venture to suggest, temerarious though the suggestion be, that Cicero not only studied a specimen of Celtic verse, but imitated it. (*Bards* 19)

It is worth noting here that Cicero does not actually mention that Divitiacus was a bard, but rather that he was a druid who could predict the future (Cic. *Div*. 1.41.90). While Caesar gives more information on this figure, calling him Diviciacus, he gives no indication that he was a bard or even a druid, but rather, as Ronald Hutton explains, 'a leading Gallic politician' who 'guided the Roman army on campaign and led a war band of his own tribe in support of it'.[23] Rather than being especially open to Celtic influence, moreover, Cicero, with his 'inquiring mind', was typically Roman in his attitude towards the barbaric 'other', deploying 'every item in the Roman repertory of ideas hostile to the Celts'.[24]

Nevertheless, as evidence of this direct Latin imitation of 'Celtic verse', Sigerson presents the most famous lines of Cicero's largely lost poetry, from his autobiographical epic of 60 BC *De Consulatu Suo* (although not necessarily consecutive in the original, Sigerson treats them as a pair). These are 'much-abused lines', Sigerson observes, 'which … scandalise Cicero's admirers' and, 'in the eyes of some critics, brand Cicero as a poetaster'. (*Bards* 19) The first of them is only recorded

because Cicero quoted it himself on three occasions, each time in defence of his poetic talent against ridicule (including by Mark Antony):

> *Cedant arma togae, concedat laurea linguae,*
> *O fortunatam natam me consule Romam.*[25]

Cicero is a startling choice for an analysis of Latin verse, being much more famous for his speeches than for his poetry, but it is this very obscurity, and the alleged ridiculousness of the lines, that make them such powerful ballast for Sigerson. He can provide a new reading of them, based on the apparent contact between Cicero and Divitiacus, and so rescue them from their millennia of derision. 'Let us suppose', he writes, ' … that they were written in imitation of Celtic verse, and that this verse was identical in form with an ancient Irish quatrain.' He then assesses the hexameter lines according to what he regards as 'the strict laws of an ancient Gaelic quatrain'—the use of couplets, rhyming vowels at the end of the line (monosyllabic in the first couplet and disyllabic in the second), and alliteration—and finds that they pretty much pass the test. As illustration, he arranges the lines in a new way, and adds new emphasis:

> Cedant arma tog*ae*
> Concedat laurea lingu*ae*:
> O fortunatam *natam*
> Me consule *Romam.*

'Are these remarkable similarities of structure', he asks, 'nothing but a chance coincidence?' Or are they to be explained by the direct influence of the verses translated for him by Divitiacus? Partly because he thinks the echoes are too close to be coincidental and partly because he is reluctant to ascribe bad poetry to Cicero, Sigerson rejects the first explanation. He concludes, instead, that 'Cicero made an experiment in verse-structure on a Celtic model'. (*Bards* 20)

Moving on to his theory of 1922, we find that part of Sigerson's evidence for the Irish 'nationality' of Sedulius is a traditional attribution put forward by Johannes Trithemius in the fifteenth century, who, Sigerson notes, 'could not be impeached of partiality in assigning Sedulius to the

Irish Celts'. (*ES* 4–5) Trithemius, however, was misled by a confusion between Sedulius, author of the fifth-century *Easter Song*, and Sedulius Scotus, the Irish grammarian of the ninth century.[26] Another part of Sigerson's evidence is the internal character of the epic, which betrays 'a fondness for, and a familiarity with the sea which well became an islander', alongside 'that fine love of natural beauty, which so distinguished the ancient Irish poets'. (*ES* 7) Interestingly, Sigerson also identifies a Celtic quality in the 'tragic power' of Sedulius' account of the lamentation after the massacre of the innocents, suggesting that Sedulius 'had in his memory the custom of his own nation', and particularly the keen or the '"Irish cry"', for 'nowhere does the expression of passionate emotion, by voice and gesture, appear to have been so intense, so general, and so persistent as amongst the Celts'.[27] (*ES* 101–2) However, as with his identification of Divitiacus' influence on Cicero twenty-five years earlier, Sigerson's principal evidence is the music of the Latin hexameter.[28]

To begin with, Sigerson notes 'the remarkable complex peculiarities of verse-structure' in Sedulius' epic, ' … which, being identical with those of early Gaelic verse, would of themselves demonstrate its Irish origin': (*ES* 7)

> by evidence indisputable, it is here shown that he bordered each of his five Books, with a couplet wrought with Irish art, so complex and so fine that his Latin poem may be likened to a toga decorated with a band of interlaced embroidery and not with the *latus clavus* plain purple stripe of the Roman Senator. (*ES* vi)

In the second appendix, Sigerson lays out this theory in more detail. The final book of the epic, he argues, ends with two lines 'rimed in the artistic Irish manner', containing both '"Concord" or alliteration' and internal rhymes at the end of each 'semi-metre'. Their 'Irish structure-characteristics' are, he argues, 'manifest to ear and eye': (*ES* 213)

> *Facta* redemptoris, nec *Totus* Cingere *mundus*
> sufficeret *densos* per *Tanta* volumina *libros*.[29]
>
> [Sigerson's emphasis]

He gives a detailed footnote in the text itself, pointing out that Sedulius here 'signs his great Epic by a couplet in Irish metric'. In the first line, he explains,

> there are three dissyllables with perfect double broad vowel rimes, re-echoed by an interlaced riming word, 'tanta,' in the second line. There are also three consonant alliterations t t c. In the second line there are two dissyllables, with delicately varied vowel rimes … Be it observed that the final riming syllable is in 'os,' which also is found to be the final of the First Book (and not elsewhere), a most marked Irish characteristic link between first and last. (*ES* 143)

On these grounds, Sigerson concludes that Sedulius was Irish, and that he deliberately 'cast the Latin into such a Celtic mould'. (*ES* 222–4) 'It is manifest', he adds, 'that accurate knowledge, great care, and studious skill must have co-operated to produce such exact complete and varied examples of the Irish metric in Latin verse.' (*ES* 217)

As in 1897, in other words, Sigerson hears Latin poetry with an ear attuned to Irish verse-structure, and so rediscovers something about the true nature of that poetry, and substantiates his theories about the unexpected (indeed, deliberately underplayed and misrepresented) importance of Celtic culture to the Roman world: 'the Golden Bough for us', he declares, 'is the Gaelic metric.' (*ES* 212) In 1897, this key had allowed him to unlock the mystery of Cicero's apparently ridiculous lines, redeeming a Latin text through the intervention of Irish poetry. In 1922, it enables the correct identification of the author of the first Latin biblical epic of Late Antiquity and the discovery of that most valuable thing: an Irish epic.[30]

Several contemporary reviewers wholeheartedly accepted Sigerson's theory about Sedulius, seeing it as another boost for the nationalist enterprise, and arguing that he had now 'earned for himself the undying gratitude of his countrymen'.[31] 'It would be difficult to overrate the value of the present volume to history, to literature and to the cause of Irish nationality', wrote a critic in the *Catholic Bulletin*,

> … For Ireland, the Easter Song has a value far surpassing the discovery and description of a royal tomb in an Egyptian valley; for with the Easter Song there is now presented incontrovertible proof that Sedulius, its author, was an Irishman.[32]

'What a remarkable contribution to history and literature', the *Irish Monthly* declared, 'has been given us by the veteran poet, thinker, scholar and patriot … Dr. George Sigerson.'[33] But, as Carl Springer explains in his edition of the *Easter Song*, however hazy the biographical details may be about Sedulius, 'we can be quite sure, at any rate, that [he] was not

Irish'.[34] There are also potential flaws in Sigerson's metrical hypothesis: 'this was always a pet theory of Dr. Sigerson's', wrote the translator and folklorist Douglas Hyde, 'but I do not think it can be substantiated, at least not in its entirety', pointing out that Sigerson sidesteps the standard laws of Latin.[35] For instance, when he argues for assonance between the 'u' sounds of *seculi* and *induit* in the opening lines of the *Easter Song*, this overlooks the fact that the stress of both words falls on the first syllable, not the second; as Hyde writes, Sedulius would not have pronounced *induit* as 'rhyming with "he knew it"'.[36] Along with the possible objections to Sigerson's claims about Cicero's attitude to and knowledge of Divitiacus, as noted above, his theories on Ciceronian/Celtic metre could be questioned on the same grounds.

What, then, is the relevance of Sigerson's theories today? In terms of intellectual history and the history of identity creation, their 'scholarly' validity is not really that significant (although, it should be stressed, they do tap into several substantial phenomena, not least the development of Hiberno-Latin). As a review of the Sedulius translation put it, readers can be 'interested in Dr. Sigerson's presentment of his case, even though they are not convinced'; what matters, in other words, is how they engage with and influence contemporary 'patterns of imagination'.[37] In 1897, Yeats urged 'historical students' to pay attention to Sigerson's arguments 'about the influence of Gaelic metres … upon the literature of Europe'.[38] Given the significance of Sigerson as a figure, and the vexed question of Celtic–Latin relations in the Revival, it is worth doing just that and considering how his Cicero and Sedulius theories contribute to a version of Irish identity.

Identity

If the Irish Revival was an exploration of what 'Irishness' could consist of, then *Bards of the Gael and Gall* was a programmatic statement about that potential identity. The pairing in its title refers to the twelfth-century *Cogad Gáedel re Gallaib*, or *War of the Gaels and the Foreigners*, transforming the division between Gael and Gall into a shared poetic tradition. According to Hyde, Sigerson 'either was, or pretended to be,

inordinately proud of his Norse ancestry', tracing his family back to the Viking invasions of the ninth century, and stressing that the name Sigerson was 'only Sicar's or Sigurd's son'.[39] He signs himself in the dedication to *Bards* as 'one of the Gall-Gael', or, in other words, one of those Viking 'foreigners' who mixed and assimilated with the native Gaels. Although to an extent this pairing is a tactical move, allowing Sigerson to assert his own role in the Revival (and even his own neutrality, in the Preface to his first collection) as well as to navigate smoothly between the often conflicting Anglo-Irish and Gaelic strands of Revivalist nationalism, it can also be read as an expression of a genuinely pluralistic view of Irish culture. Seamus Deane has argued that Sigerson's book, thanks to its title and its broad pool of translations, denotes a 'refusal to identify an "Irish note" in poetry that was peculiar to any one group', and a denial of 'an exclusively "Celtic" spirit'.[40] In Norman Vance's assessment, Sigerson argued 'not for the splendid isolation of the Gael but for splendid permeation', and 'challenged the popular view that the Danes merely prefigured the Normans and the English as sworn enemies of incipient Irish nationality'.[41] Sigerson's model of interaction between the Classic and non-Classic worlds is clearly another aspect of this policy of cultural openness, working against the (perceived) drift of the Revival towards 'exceptionalism and insularity', but it also plays a more subtle role through its transformation of the direction of Celtic–Roman influence.[42]

As has been noted elsewhere in this volume, the process of Romanization was a useful reinforcement for British imperialism, both through the template of Romanization-as-civilization—and therefore empire as a good thing—and through the sense that Britain's own Romanized status gave it superiority over 'barbaric' nations. In her study of Classics and imperialism, Rama Mantena offers a concise manifestation of this dynamic from Trevelyan's 1838 treatise *On the education of the people of India:* 'the Romans at once civilized the nations of Europe, and attached them to their rule by Romanizing them … teaching them to emulate their conquerors instead of opposing them.'[43] In Bhabha's terms of 'colonial mimicry', Trevelyan's self-reflexive description of imperial beneficence reveals the desire of the 'civilizing mission' to impel the subject nation to emulate rather than oppose, and so to exist in its own—though altered—image, 'reformed [and] recognizable'.[44] The question of

whether or not Ireland had been Romanized could therefore serve as a decisive fault-line in nineteenth-century characterizations of Ireland as either barbaric or as civilized. Many Revivalists argued that Irish freedom from Roman rule was its particular strength, while some imperialists held this freedom to be both cause of Irish barbarity and evidence of the need for continued British rule in Ireland.

Fletcher and Kipling, in their infamous history written 'for all boys and girls who are interested in the story of Great Britain and her Empire', portray the 'great warrior' Agricola's failure to conquer Ireland as a fatal step in the long narrative of Irish intransigence: 'Ireland never went to school, and has been a spoilt child ever since … incapable of ruling herself, and impatient of all rule by others.'[45] Similarly, F.S. Haverfield declared in a paper of 1913 that, although in most cases 'the Kelts are the spiritual heirs of the Roman empire', since they have fallen 'under Roman rule, accepted Roman culture, used Roman speech, and … preserved Roman civilization to later Europe', 'one land alone remained Keltic and not Roman'.[46] Ireland's 'Keltic and not Roman' state has critically hobbled the course of its history, leading to neglect of the few coins of Roman origin to be found in Ireland, for instance, because 'modern Ireland cares little for ancient Rome'.[47] On the other side of the fault-line, Douglas Hyde proclaimed in a famous speech to the National Literary Society on 'the necessity of de-anglicising Ireland', that the Irish alone, 'of the nations of Western Europe escaped the claws of those birds of prey; we alone developed ourselves naturally upon our own lines outside of and free from all Roman influence'.[48]

For Revivalists like Hyde, a 'de-anglicized' Ireland was also a 'de-Romanized' one, free from influence and emulation. Hence, any hint of Romanness in the nascent Celtic identity of the Revival could bring with it great scandal. A controversy unfolded in the nationalist newspaper the *United Irishman*, for example, after the first performance of J.M. Synge's *The Shadow of the Glen* in 1903, because the paper's editor and founder of Sinn Féin, Arthur Griffith, believed the play to be based on Synge's reading of 'the most infamous of Roman writers, Petronius Arbiter, the pander of Nero'.[49] The following year, the writer and politician Frank Hugh O'Donnell baulked at the Roman quality of W.B. Yeats'

dramatization of stories ‘from the Celtic Past’.[50] In plays like *The Countess Cathleen*, he explained,

> Mr. Yeats … labels his characters Maire, and Cathleen, and Oona, and Grania, and Diarmuid, and Conan, and Shemus, and Maurteen. He says, ‘the scene is in Ancient Ireland.’ He might just as well have gone to his dictionary for Brutus, and Antony, and Scipio, and Tullia, and Julia, and Faustina, and written, ‘the scene is Ancient Rome.’[51]

Although these objections stem partly from other concerns, notably Catholic nationalist mistrust of the Abbey Theatre as an Anglo-Irish institution, they show how loaded the question of Roman influence was in the Revival, and how intensely difficult it was to find a place for an independent Irish identity in the watertight association of Rome with British imperialism.[52] Sigerson’s theories, therefore, are significant for their efforts to find this place for Ireland, and so to establish a truly postcolonial Celtic–Roman connection. His Cicero and Sedulius hypotheses propose that, rather than the Romans Romanizing the Celts, the Celts Celticized the Romans. Or, to put it in terms of colonial mimicry, rather than the Celts imitating the Romans, the Romans (in the person of Cicero) imitated the Celts. Sigerson resists the dynamic of colonized mimicking colonizer, simply by reversing it.

Similarly, in the *Easter Song*, Sigerson paints a vivid picture of Sedulius the ‘Irish Celt’, dressed ‘in the splendid array of an Irish chief’, travelling through Romanized Gaul on his way to Athens (where Sigerson argues he wrote his epic in 430 AD) ‘on the great highways of the Empire’. (*ES* 8, 10) In Gaul, he comes face to face with ‘the square Roman camp … guarded by the stern Power against which his far kindred had so often flung themselves … but whose literature had always conquered’ and, in an arresting simile, discovers ‘Roman civilisation and language overlying the native culture and customs, like a vast sheet of glittering ice above the unfrozen founts of living water.’ (*ES* 8, 10–11) Sedulius arrives in this Roman Gaul as a sort of saviour, struggling to free Celtic (and Christian) culture from the icy grip of Latin, and make Latin, instead, fit ‘into a Celtic mould’:

> A true poet, profoundly convinced of the truth, beauty, and greatness of his subject, he was the ardent Knight-champion of a Cause against which all the imperial traditions of pagan culture strove, as yet unopposed. (*ES* 76)

By 1922, the terms of debate have shifted somewhat from the Cicero theory, given that Sigerson has moved away from individual Celtic–Latin influence (instead of the Celtic poet influencing the Latin poet, the Celt and the Latin poet are now one person), and given that he has moved from Classical to Late Antiquity and from druidic/Roman religion to Christianity. However, the underlying framework between Cicero in the first century BC and Sedulius in the fifth century AD has not really changed; Sigerson's emphasis remains firmly placed on empire and on issues of Romanization. In the Sedulius theory, he fights against the dominance of the colonizing language and reasserts the role of the colonized, demonstrating that 'the Celtic language' in fifth-century Roman Gaul 'still existed behind the official Latin', and that it 'possessed a vitality so vigorous as to modify the Latin speech'. (*ES* 50) What Divitiacus was to Cicero, when he introduced him to Celtic poetry and even translated some for him to imitate, Sedulius is for the entirety of the Romanized Celtic world.

Revealingly, in a speech to the National Literary Society in 1899, Sigerson had responded to an earlier iteration of O'Donnell's criticism of Yeats, by comparing Yeats' dramatic pioneers to the Celts who, led by Brennus, invaded Rome before 'the alarm was given to the Capitol by the ever-vigilant geese'.[53] In response to Griffith and O'Donnell, in other words, Sigerson admits a connection between Roman and Celtic, but ensures that this connection is carefully managed and, in particular, that it is the Celts who are in the position of power and influence. Such Celtic influence on the Roman world works against entrenched imperialist ideas about the barbarity of the Irish, and about an inherent link between that barbarity and the nature of Ireland's relationship (or lack thereof) with Rome. Moreover, while for some Revivalists a truly independent Irish identity must be removed from Classical Rome, for Sigerson the fact that Ireland *was* closely related to Rome in the past might be a spur to it becoming non-British in the future.

Translation

Sigerson put these theories about the postcolonial power of cross-linguistic influence into practice in his own translation strategy. It is not

just the poetry of Cicero and Sedulius which are influenced by 'Celtic' metres, but his own. As Welch explains, Sigerson 'adopted the imitation of Gaelic metre in English as a fundamental translating policy', reproducing, particularly in *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, the rhythm, assonance, alliteration, and rhyme of the originals.[54] As Latin does in Cicero and Sedulius, so English does in Sigerson: it imitates Irish. This signals a significant break from conventional practice at this point in the nineteenth century. Maria Tymoczko has identified a general trend in nineteenth-century translations of Irish into English to prioritize fidelity of content over form, distorting the original in order to tally with established forms from the English tradition, and so signal 'that they were to be read as literature'.[55] Sigerson, by contrast, mobilizes what he has identified in Cicero and Sedulius and, privileging formal faithfulness over content, works to make English behave like Irish.[56]

Sigerson's strategy has some striking results, as in 'The First Elegy', for example, in which Sigerson explains that 'the metre and rime-sounds of the original are reproduced in the English version':

> Sate we sole, in cliff–bower—
> Chill winds shower—
> I tremble yet—shock of dread
> Sped death's power.
> The tale I tell: fate has felled
> Fáil most fine.
>
> She a man, bare, beheld,
> In sun shine,
> Shock of death, death's dread power,
> Lowered fell fate,
> Bare I came, hence her shame,
> Stilled she sate (*Bards* 112)

The echoes of Gerard Manley Hopkins here (cf. 'Ferns flush red', from 'Winter's Approach' at 130) lead to tantalizing speculations. After all, in 1844, the year Hopkins arrived at University College to take up his post in

Classics, Sigerson was the Professor of Botany. Might Hopkins have consulted Sigerson as a doctor, for his 'distributed, constant, and crippling' melancholy?[57]

This is a long shot, especially given that the similarities can be partially explained through Hopkins' interest in Welsh prosody. However, whether or not Sigerson was influenced by Hopkins, noticing such echoes does emphasize the sophistication of Sigerson's translations, and the literary quality that his cross-linguistic mixing creates.[58] It also helps to uncover a further implication of Sigerson's Celtic–Latin theory. Looked at in the light of Gerard Manley Hopkins, Cicero's poetry—with its insistent alliteration, its bold rhythm, and its mixing of languages—stops being an 'unfortunate jingle' with 'unfortunate assonances' and starts being something ground-breaking and, perhaps, something modern.[59] According to Sigerson's theory, the cause of Cicero's ridicule and Sedulius' misidentification is their very novelty and their determination to 'experiment in verse-structure'. (*Bards* 20) Like Hopkins as a modernist in the Victorian age, Cicero and Sedulius were, for Sigerson, too modern for their own time, and what makes them good literature has also made them 'buried literature'. (*Bards* 17)

The problem, Sigerson explains, is that where modern readers have expected a Classical Latin hexameter in Cicero and Sedulius' work, they have found instead a radical Celtic–Latin crossover, which they either cannot or will not comprehend, blinded by their 'traditional habit of looking at ancient Europe from a Roman standpoint and through a Roman atmosphere'. (*ES* 6–7) In an 1878 edition of the *Easter Song*, Johannes Huemer, for instance, erred in his analysis because he discounted the possibility of cross-pollination between 'the classic and non-classic worlds'. He therefore failed 'to see that such endings as "aevi" and "caeli," "creando" and "castro" are perfect Gaelic two-syllabic vowel-rimes'. The editor, Sigerson claims, had:

> examined the Sedulian verse as a … Latinist might have examined it, seen the repetitions of sounds similar to what had been noted in classic authors … but he had not the Cumaean Golden Bough and could not enter, explore, and explain.
>
> (*ES* 211)

What is required, then, is a new reading strategy, one that can read a text not as straightforwardly Classical, or as straightforwardly Celtic, but as

both Celtic *and* Classical, an approach, as Sigerson puts it, that can 'admire alike the stately Parthenon and the picturesque forest', and so cease to be 'confined by the golden chains of classic tradition'. Sigerson's Celtic–Roman theories emerge as significant, therefore, not only as theories about influence and imitation, but also as theories about how to read texts. In addition to demonstrating the Irish-born status of Sedulius, and the literary friendship between Cicero and Divitiacus, Sigerson puts forward a certain experimental type of reading, which looks across different languages and traditions—across different 'schools of versification'—and is closely attuned to echoes of 'eye or ear'. (*Bards* 49)

When seen in this light, with an eye to its Celtic character as well as to its Roman—i.e. when the influence of Divitiacus is acknowledged—Cicero's rebellious, odd, idiosyncratic verse stops being bad Latin and becomes good Celtic–Latin. Sedulius, likewise, 'conscious that his work would be regarded as an audacious innovation', becomes a pioneer, 'true poet', and 'ardent Knight-Champion'. (*ES* 61) Referring back to the paradigm (both Revivalist and imperialist) whereby the pattern of Irish identity creates a division between Irish Celts, on the one hand, and Roman Britons on the other, Sigerson's identification of the existence of a unique Celtic–Roman literary character allows him to align Irish Celts with Rome but *not* with Britain. He identifies a new Celticized Rome, which can resist and replace the Anglicized Rome of empire.

Conclusion

What is potentially most radical about Sigerson's theory is that it liberates Ireland from the grip of Rome (and Britain) through a comparative reading of Irish and Latin literature. Given the imperial force of comparison as an interpretive technique, his experiment in Celtic–Latin comparative reading as a nationalist and postcolonial tool gains new power.[60] It positions him as a counter to the dominant mode of nineteenth-century Celtic–Classical comparisons, which align Celtic Ireland and the Classical world in order, by and large, to make Ireland as colony understandable, and therefore manageable, through defining it in reference to the Classical world. Matthew Arnold, for instance, exploited the parallelism between Ireland and Rome as created by comparative philology, in order to yoke Ireland

firmly within Britain's reach and defuse any possible resistance: 'who does not feel his mind agreeably cleared about our friends the Fenians', he declared, 'when he learns that the root of their name *fen* … appears … in the Roman Venedotia? … How delightfully that brings Ireland into the Indo-European concert!'[61] Similarly, comparative folklorists who turned their attention excitedly to Ireland in the nineteenth century as the best surviving Celtic tradition, viewed their expansive gaze as an imperial device, often explicitly. Alfred Nutt, for instance, likened English folkloric science to the Roman Empire, in its ability to survey and catalogue the variety of mankind and so rear 'a structure of institutions not unworthy to be set side by side of the Roman, and destined to control the fortunes of even wider realms and more numerous populations'.[62] If we view Sigerson's theory as an experiment in Celtic–Latin comparative literature, reading across different 'schools of versification', then alternative forms of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century comparison begin to appear, which put the Celtic, not the Classical, in the dominant position.[63]

Sigerson's Cicero and Sedulius arguments were instrumental in his suggestions about the breadth of Irish identity and in his own translation technique. As Welch has demonstrated, his translation style went on to influence several modernists, including Austin Clarke, so it is surely important to acknowledge that this pioneering strategy—its break from the translation style of the earlier nineteenth century, its development as a mechanism with which to push against British colonial domination, and its literary quality—is fundamentally linked to his theories about Celtic–Roman influence and about innovative, experimental Celtic–Latinity.[64] Moreover, as suggested by the objections of Arthur Griffith and Frank Hugh O'Donnell, and by the meticulous balancing of identities in *Bards of the Gael and Gall*, the question of how different texts from different traditions can exist alongside each other was an extremely fraught one in the Revival, as Ireland tried to determine the extent to which 'Irish' literature could be in touch with 'foreign' traditions and yet still remain Irish. Sigerson's reading strategy provides a way for Irish literature to accept influences without entering into the dynamic of colonial mimicry, and so to contain mixed and varied rather than only 'Celtic' notes. Irish freedom from Rome does not have to mean Irish separation from Rome, but instead the recognition and recovery of a Celticized rather than an

Anglicized Roman world, read through a loose and creative interpretive strategy open to the existence of a Celtic–Latin literary tradition.

Finally, as the relationship between ancient Roman and Celt was refigured through Sigerson's discoveries, so the relationship between modern Briton and Irish could be refigured through a careful use of translation, and a certain type of intertextual writing and reading practice. What the Celts did to the Roman Empire, in other words,—in the nexus of Divitiacus and Cicero, and in the efforts of Sedulius in Gaul—the Irish might be about to do to the British Empire, in the efforts of Revivalist translators like Sigerson.

Arabella Currie, *Moderns of the Past, Moderns of the Future: George Sigerson's Celtic-Romans in Ireland, 1897?1922* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0009

[1] Yeats (1962) 377.

[2] Carthaginians © 1996 by Frank McGuinness, 311. All rights whatsoever in this play are strictly reserved and application for performance etc., must be made before rehearsal to Casarotto Ramsay & Associates Ltd., 3rd Floor, 7 Savoy Court, Strand, London WC2R 0EX (info@casarotto.co.uk). No performance may be given unless a licence has been obtained.

[3] Sigerson (1907) 2. All subsequent references to *Bards of the Gael and Gall* (abbr. *Bards*) will be in-text references to this edition.

[4] J.B. Lyons (1997) 50. Kiberd and Mathews position him among the 'subtler analysts of the psychological underpinnings' of late-nineteenth-century Ireland: Kiberd and Mathews (2015) 205.

[5] For an analysis of his Cú Chulainn theory, see Kiberd (2000) 397–8.

[6] For overviews of Sigerson's life and work, see Hyde (1925) 1–18; Clarke (1926) 76; Curran (1970) 82–95; McGilloway (2011).

[7] Rolleston (1914) 235.

[8] Boyd (1922) 57.

[9] Kiberd (1996) 4.

[10] Sigerson (1860) xii. Cf. Hall in this volume on the pedagogical use of literary versions of Welsh traditions (148–9).

[11] Kiberd (1996) 1; F.S.L. Lyons (1979) 85; Foster (2014).

[12] Milligan (1908) n. pag; MacDonagh (1916) n. pag. MacDonagh reviewed Sigerson's *Saga of King Lir*, comparing it to *Antigone*: MacDonagh (1914) 29–32. Sigerson's daughter, Dora Sigerson, was a prominent poet, painter, and sculptor who designed a 1916 memorial in

Glasnevin Cemetery and who reputedly died from heartbreak over the Rising: Sigerson Shorter (1918) xii. See also Hyde (1918) 139–44.

13 McGeachie (2010) 126.

14 Brannigan (2015) 33. For the idea of an Atlantic community as an identity marker in the Revival, see also Ashley (2000) 175–93; Allen (2012) 166–71. For a less fraught relationship between Irish identity and ancient Rome in an earlier period, see Fulton in this volume (62–3).

15 Since Edward Said stressed that Yeats belonged in a context 'not usually considered his, that of the colonial world ruled by European imperialism during a climactic insurrectionary stage'—Said (1994) 220—and since Kiberd (1996) applied that lens more broadly, the Revival has increasingly been studied as a postcolonial or decolonial movement, though with a mind to the particularities of Ireland as a colony, e.g. its closeness (geographical and cultural) to the colonizing power, and the '"mixed" nature of the experience of Irish people, as both exponents and victims of British imperialism': Kiberd (1996) 5. See, for example, Mustafa (1998) 36–53; Cleary (2005) 251–65.

16 It is worth emphasizing here that 'Rome' in this chapter is a Classical signifier. As Hingley points out, there are several different 'Romes' in any given formulation—'the Roman Republic, the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Eternal City of Rome and the Roman papacy'—and in an Irish context Rome often implies Catholicism rather than Classics, Hingley (2000) 5.

17 Anon (1897) 442.

18 Curran (1970) 91; Hyde (1900) 331.

19 Schirmer (1998) 169.

20 Welch (1988) 163; Schirmer (1998) 89.

21 For druids as prime candidates for potential Celtic–Classical crossover, see, e.g., Hall in this volume on Mason's Sophoclean–Druidic chorus (143).

22 Sigerson (1922) 262. All subsequent references to *The Easter Song* (abbr. *ES*) will be in-text references to this edition. In his inaugural lecture to the National Literary Society, Sigerson had assigned this distinction between Classical and Celtic literature to different systems of government: 'the rhythmical tramp of the hexameter of Hellas and Rome … re-appear[s] in the disciplined tread of phalanx and legion, and the long-continued control of their rule … Our ancient laws and history reveal the existence of great capacity for complex social mechanism with a minor grasp of dominating and sustained control.' Sigerson (1894) 81–2.

23 Hutton (2009) 5.

24 Rankin (1996) 121, in reference to Cicero's *Pro Fonteio*.

25 'Let swords bend to toga and triumph bow to tongue / O Roman state, how fortunate, born within my consulate.'

26 Springer (2013) xvi.

27 He rebukes those who have stigmatized the keen for 'not knowing that it recalls the ancient rites of Rome, of Athens, of Troy'. This parallel reappears elsewhere, for example in the hugely influential 1806 novel *The Wild Irish Girl*: Owenson (1999) 182–3, and MacNeill (1910) 25–6. For a study of parallels between Irish and ancient Greek mourning, see Macintosh (1994).

28 It is worth noting that although both these Latin poems are in hexameters, Sigerson is not claiming that all Latin hexameter is based on Celtic metrics, but rather something particular about Sedulius and Cicero.

[29] ‘For not the world could all the books confine / Were it ordained in Holy Writ to shrine / All things accomplished by our Lord divine.’ (*ES* 143)

[30] For the search for an Irish ‘epic’ along Classical lines during the Revival, see, for example, Dwan (2004) 207–9. In *Ulysses*, published shortly before *The Easter Song*, Joyce reports Sigerson proclaiming that ‘our national epic has yet to be written’, Joyce (2000) 246.

[31] Anon. (1923) 414.

[32] Anon. (1923) 414.

[33] O’Neill (1923) 300.

[34] Springer (2013) 11.

[35] Hyde (1925) 10.

[36] Hyde (1925) 10.

[37] ‘A.G.’ (1923) 162; Leerssen (1996b) 4.

[38] Yeats (2004) 348. Yeats became more critical of Sigerson after the latter censured the Abbey Theatre following the *Playboy* controversy. See Curran (1970) 94.

[39] Hyde (1925) 2.

[40] Deane (1991) 722. See his speech to the National Literary Society, where he describes his ‘dismay’ at finding ‘some of my patriotic young friends deciding what is and what is not the Irish style in prose and the Irish note in poetry’, Sigerson (1894) 71.

[41] Vance (1990) 173.

[42] Brannigan (2015) 6. Several of the poems chosen by Sigerson for inclusion in the anthology display the Celtic–Classical comparative tendency described by Coira in this volume (103–8). See, for example, *Bards* 242, 316, 317, 334, 339. The poem on Alexander the Great, glossed by Coira at 105 n.36, is at 208–9.

[43] Mantena (2010) 58.

[44] Bhabha (2004) 122.

[45] Fletcher and Kipling (1911) 21.

[46] Haverfield (1913) 1. For Haverfield and Romanization, see Hingley (2000) 111–29.

[47] Haverfield (1913) 4.

[48] Hyde (1894) 125.

[49] Yeats (2005) 31.

[50] O’Donnell (1904) 9.

[51] O’Donnell (1904) 12–13.

[52] It was in some ways easier to align the Celts and the Greeks, see Currie (2017). But more often during the Revival (and later in the twentieth century), the Irish Celts were aligned with non-Classical antiquities, including the Carthaginian—see Cullingford (1996) 222–39—Pelasgian, Etruscan, and Indian—see Lennon (2004).

[53] Quoted in Curran (1970) 93.

[54] Welch (1988) 162.

[55] Tymoczko (2014) 110.

[56] Sigerson was interested in Irish-Classical translations from an early age. According to his daughter, while growing up in Artigarvan ‘he would walk four miles to Strabane and back’ to read MacHale’s Irish translation of the *Iliad*, and he won a prize while studying in Paris for a Latin translation of Thomas Campbell’s ‘The Exile of Erin’: McGilloway (2011) 6, 10.

[57] Hopkins (2013) 731.

[58] Schirmer observes that he also incorporates aesthetics from Symbolism, along with other contemporary European contexts, in a manifestation of his pervasive desire to link Ireland with the continent, especially with France: Schirmer (1998) 166.

[59] Harrer (1928) 84, 87.

[60] For comparison as an imperial method, see, for example, Collini et al. (1987) 209–46; Said (1994) 43–61; Foucault (2002) 60–4; Bassnett (2006) 3–11; Melas (2007) x–xii; Young (2013) 683–9.

[61] Arnold (1962) 333–4.

[62] Nutt (1899) 74.

[63] For the role of comparison in Celtic–Classical negotiations during the Irish Revival, see Currie (2017).

[64] Welch (1988) 169.

10

Alternative Histories

Crypto-Celts and Crypto-Romans in the Legendarium of J.R.R. Tolkien

Philip Burton

Introduction

J.R.R. Tolkien has recently had the distinction of providing the epigraph to the catalogue of the British Museum/National Museums Scotland's 2015–16 exhibition *Celts: Art and Identity*: 'To many … "Celtic" of any sort is … a magic bag into which anything may be put, and out of which almost anything may come … Anything is possible in the fabulous Celtic twilight, not so much a twilight of the Gods as of the reason.'[1] The quotation is from Tolkien's 1955 lecture *English and Welsh*, to which we will return later, yet has a modishly postmodern ring to it, not usually associated with the late Rawlinson and Bosworth Professor. Narratives of late-antique and early-medieval Europe have traditionally been couched in terms of invasions and displacements by hypostatized ethnic groups: the Gothic and Vandal crossings of the Danube and the Rhine, the Arab conquests in North Africa, the Anglo-Saxon settlements in Britain, and so forth. Similar questions of ethnicity and of territory emerge frequently in Tolkien's fiction, and it is sometimes suggested that he perpetuates the classic Romantic nationalisms of blood, soil, and language. In this chapter, we shall suggest rather that Tolkien reimagines British history in ways that repeatedly complicate such essentialist identities. While his fictitious

peoples include several which may be seen as crypto-Celts or crypto-Saxons, these groupings are, like their real-world counterparts, seldom pure and never simple. His crypto-Romans, for their part, allow Tolkien to reflect on other matters of close personal interest to him. Overlaps between all three cultural types—Celtic, Germanic, and Roman—are thus a fundamental part of Tolkien's alternative British histories.

First, some background.[2] Tolkien's interest in matters Celtic began early. Birmingham, where he grew up, is some fifty miles from Wales. After his mother's early death, he and his brother became wards of a Welsh/Spanish priest, one Fr Francis Morgan. His interest in philology was sparked in part by seeing Welsh words on railway trucks. As a pupil at King Edward's, Birmingham, he gained an excellent grounding in Greek and Latin (also the language he would have heard daily at Mass), and began to teach himself Gothic and the older Germanic languages. As an undergraduate at Oxford he spent prize money on Welsh books, even if he ignored the advice of the legendary Germanicist Joe Wright to 'Go in for Celtic, lad; there's money in it'.[3] His Celtic scholarship (thoroughly documented by Phelpstead 2011) is evident in the edition of *Gawain* which he prepared with his Leeds colleague E.V. Gordon (1925). He learned Irish too, though with less pleasure and more difficulty. For both the Welsh and Irish peoples of his day he expressed warm if not uncritical feeling.[4] He was also a frequent visitor to Cornwall.[5]

The influence of Celtic mythology on Tolkien's fiction has likewise been traced. Chapman, in his debunking of the 'myth' of Celticism (1992: 243–8), argues that Tolkien's Elves are, in effect, crypto-Celts, destined to a marginal existence on the western fringes of Middle-earth; a suggestive account, though not one followed here.[6] More detailed studies of the relationship between his fiction and Celtic mythology have been supplied by Burns (2005) and by Fimi (2006, 2007). Indeed, his 'legendarium'—his cycle of Middle-earth stories—he created as a context for his Elvish languages, the phonology of which is largely based on Welsh; thus Elvish makes extensive use of Celtic-style initial lenition (compare, e.g., *perian* 'halfling, hobbit', and *i-pheriannath* 'of the halflings'). Less explored has been Tolkien's use of story as a means of rewriting history. As a philologist he knew well that the two were etymologically identical; and

though he knew also that cognate words may have different meanings, he seems drawn to the idea that history and story were not radically different.

Second, some terminological matters. I use the phrases ‘crypto-Celts’ and ‘crypto-Romans’ to refer to people who, at a given place, substantially play the role of stereotypical Celt or Roman. Often the argument for these identifications is cumulative. It is not claimed that these ‘crypto-Celts’ *et cetera* are just real-world figures in disguise; simply that there are enough similarities to allow us to make at least a partial equation.

Readers of Tolkien may object to these identifications on the grounds that Tolkien famously claimed that he ‘cordially dislike[d] allegory in all its forms’; that the work had at least ‘in the intention of the author no […] inner message or “meaning”’; rather, ‘I think that many confuse “applicability” with “allegory”’.[7] To this objection I propose three answers. The first is, as Shippey has argued,[8] that Tolkien could use allegory, quite explicitly, when it suited him—as, for instance, in his 1936 British Academy lecture on *Beowulf*, where he compares the poem to a tower built using stones from a nearby ruin. Likewise his fascination with the Middle English poem *Pearl* does not suggest an author opposed to all modes of figurative writing. The second is that some characters and situations in his work so closely resemble those in the ‘real world’ that it is hard not to draw the connection. Thus the Rohirrim or Riders of Rohan in *The Lord of the Rings* have often been recognized as being crypto-Anglo-Saxons or crypto-Common Germanics, somewhat idealized.[9] Their language is represented by Old English, their poetry and proverbs by Germanic alliterative verse, and the specimen of the two given by Aragorn (‘Where now are the horse and the rider?’) is based closely on lines 92ff of the Old English poem *The Wanderer* (*Hwær cwom mearg? Hwær cwom mago?* …).[10] To deny any link seems perverse.

The third answer is that Tolkien does not, in fact, reject figurative interpretations outright. His central distinction between ‘applicability’ and ‘allegory’ is carefully phrased: ‘the one resides in the freedom of the reader, and the other in the purposed domination of the author.’ Now the triumph of freedom over purposed domination is the one great theme of Tolkien’s fiction. In setting up the opposition between ‘applicability’ and ‘allegory’ in these terms, he effectively renounces his claim to a controlling stake in the interpretation of his work. Even his statement that

his work has no inner meaning ‘in the intention of the author’ leaves open the possibility that it may have an inner meaning in the intention of another Author.[11]

Our second key term is that of the ‘alternative history’, a phrase used to refer to the creation of fictional scenarios which both recall and offer different versions of ‘real-life’ history. Thus Rohirrim are, as we have seen, crypto-Anglo-Saxons. At the climactic Battle of the Pelennor Fields, their new king Éomer finds himself cut off by his impetuous cavalry charge and surrounded. He retreats to a hillock, forms a shield-wall, and prepares to make a final stand—a sequence of actions which recalls closely those of Harold Godwinson at Hastings, an event which weighed on Tolkien’s mind ‘as much’, his official biographer records, ‘as if it had happened in his lifetime’.[12] But at that moment Aragorn arrives with reinforcements, and, in a typically Tolkienian *eucatastrophe* or unexpected happy ending, the day is saved.[13] Granted Tolkien’s ‘freedom of the reader’, the concept of the alternative history seems useful in such cases.

What, then, constitutes a crypto-Celt? On the historical level, language clearly matters; Celtic languages are typically seen (by others) as foreign and difficult. Celts are often marginalized, geographically and politically, by encroachments from outside; by Romans, by Germanic speakers, and by modernity in general. On the ideational level, the Romantic stereotype of the Celts, as found in such writings as Gray’s *The Bard* (1757), Macpherson’s Ossianic poems (1760–5), Renan’s *La poésie des races celtiques* (1854), Arnold’s *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867), Yeats’ *The Celtic Twilight* (1893), and the works of Lady Gregory, was widely current in Tolkien’s youth.[14] Romantic Celts are marked by melancholy, shot through with gaiety; bound by tribe rather than by state; inclined to be solitary. They are given to poetry, music, and unreason; to woods, hills, and the colour green; to mist and damp, often autumnal; to half-light, especially of dusk. They have a near-magical affinity with nature. They are short and dark, by the standards of taller and fairer peoples. They are doomed to resistance, usually futile; and yet they never quite go away.

Tolkien could, on occasion, articulate such familiar stereotypes. On one occasion, indeed—frustrated at his publisher’s reader’s cool response to a draft of *The Silmarillion*, and in particular at the assumption that his fictional names were Celtic—he is frankly unsympathetic: ‘I do know

Celtic things … and feel for them a certain distaste: largely for their fundamental unreason. They have bright colour, but are like a broken stained glass window reassembled without design. They are in fact "mad" as your reader says—but I don't believe I am.'[15] Such *obiter dicta*, however, should not be taken as an index of his more settled opinions, as they emerge from his fiction. It is time to descend to particulars.

'Crypto-Celts' in the First Age: Doriath and Gondolin

We begin with the First Age of Tolkien's legendarium. This is dominated by Elves, whose languages are, as noted above, modelled in part on Celtic. The Elves are divided into two ethno-linguistic groups, the Quenya or High Elves, who at the gods' behest left Middle-earth to live beyond the Sea, and the Sindar or Grey Elves, who did not. As in Celtic so also in Elvish the treatment of inherited labiovelars is a key isogloss.[16] Thus Quenya retains its /k^{w}/, which in Sindarin has passed to /p/; compare the Quenya root **quen/quet* 'speak' with Sindar *pedo*, 'speak!' Indeed, Tolkien, writing to Naomi Mitchison in 1954, states that he had devised Sindarin to have 'a linguistic character very like … British-Welsh', as this 'seems to fit the rather "Celtic" type of … stories told of its speakers'.[17]

These Celtic/Sindar connections are pervasive. The west of Middle-earth, where the Sindar live, was in Tolkien's earlier writings called Broceliand or Broseliand, the enchanted forest of the Arthurian cycle.[18] The later form, Beleriand, recalls the name Belerion applied by Diodorus Siculus (5.21.3, following Pytheas of Marseilles) to the modern Cornwall. To the High Elves, the Sindar are 'Dark Elves' (*Moriquendi*); 'dark', that is, in their affinity for Celtic-style twilight.[19] The High King of the Sindar, Thingol, first meets his divine spouse, Melian, in 'the starlit woods of Nan Elmoth',[20] and their union, as Fimi notes, echoes the 'favorite Celtic theme' of 'the relationship of a fairy woman with a mortal man'.[21] Their woodland kingdom of Doriath contains a 'region … named … the Twilight Meres, for they were wrapped in mist'.[22] Thingol's cave-palace of Menegroth is a subterranean dwelling in which 'carven figures of beasts and birds … ran upon the walls, or climbed upon the pillars, or peered among the branches entwined with many flowers'—owing something to

the decoration of such Insular manuscripts as the Book of Kells, and something to the wallpaper of William Morris.[23] This atmosphere of woodland, enchantment, starlight, mist, and general greenery link Doriath to an idealized Celtic landscape of the sort familiar to readers of W.B. Yeats, Lady Gregory, et al.

Celts are typically marginalized by invaders. For the Sindar, this role is fulfilled by the High-Elven Noldor: bellicose incomers from across the Sea, seeking 'freedom and great realms in the lands of the East'[24] (although, in a typically Tolkienian twist, the Noldor are in fact returning to their former home; if we see them as playing the crypto-Anglo-Saxons to the crypto-British-Welsh of the Sindar, then we may read this as an alternative history in which the Anglo-Saxons were in fact 'British' before their sojourn on the continent). Their arrival in Beleriand perturbs the Sindar, but Thingol's attempts to grant them 'leave to dwell' only in the 'wild and empty' lands evokes the scorn of the Noldorian prince Maedhros: 'A king is he that can hold his own, or else his title is vain'—reflecting, perhaps, a clash between Thingol's more 'Celtic', or at least 'Irish', view of kingship as a sort of moral overlordship, and Maedhros' more territorial understanding.[25] From Doriath itself, Thingol endeavours to exclude both the Noldor and their language; he refuses to join them in their wars against their common enemy Morgoth.

The later history of Doriath is beyond our present scope. It is enough to note that the catalyst for Doriath's downfall is the collapse of Thingol's policy of cultural separateness, through his daughter Lúthien's love for the Man Beren. We have noted (with Fimi) the 'Celtic' aspect of such unequal unions. It is in fact a wider theme in Tolkien's writings. At the biographical level, it may well reflect Tolkien's own courtship of Edith Bratt.[26] There is perhaps also a theological dimension to it. Within Tolkien's Middle-earth, divine intervention is often mediated through the marriage of men and elf-women and their descendants, from Beren and Lúthien down to Aragorn and Arwen. We may, at a much humbler level, note the ('absurd') story that one of Bilbo Baggins' ancestors 'must have taken a fairy wife'.[27] It is easy to see this motif as the mirror-image of the Christian myth, in which salvation is mediated through the two-natured Jesus. Most pertinently here, however, such stories exemplify the recurrent

motif in Tolkien's writing of the near-impossibility, if not the undesirability, of such a thing as a 'pure' ethnic group.

Thingol's isolationism may reflect Tolkien's concern—again a recurrent one—with the ethics of interventionism as against international laissez-faire, born of his experiences in the Great War, and doubtless reinforced in the age of the dictators. But it reflects also, I suggest, his thoughts on the politics of Celtic/Germanic relations. In attempting to keep Doriath a crypto-Celtic sylvan paradise, Thingol both turns his back on his potential allies and ultimately fails his own people.

Doriath is untypical. Elsewhere in Middle-earth, the Noldor and the Sindar generally 'welded into one people', with the Noldor adopting Sindarin as their daily language—much as if the Anglo-Saxons had adopted proto-Welsh. Nowhere is this more so than in the city of Gondolin, founded by the Noldorian prince Turgon.[28] Turgon is, at least at first, another isolationist, seeking to preserve his people by forbidding any to leave their city.[29] Turgon's sister Aredhel, however, travels abroad without his permission, and is 't[aken] to wife', in questionable circumstances, by Eöl, the 'Dark Elf'. Like his relative Thingol, Eöl is a crypto-Celtic figure, associated with twilight and enchantment, and bitterly resentful of the incoming Noldor.[30] Aredhel and Eöl come to Gondolin, where Eöl rejects Turgon's friendly overtures and denounces the Noldorian claims to lands in Beleriand. Turgon in turn taunts Eöl for relying on the 'swords of the Noldor' for protection in his 'sunless woods'. Events move swiftly. Eöl, having killed Aredhel, is taken for execution to 'a pinnacle of black rock' called the Caragdûr;[31] 'Dark Fang' in Sindar, but recalling also Welsh *carreg ddu*, Scots Gaelic *creag dubh*, 'black rock', and so on. This is, then, on our reading, a story about Celts and incomers, showing the perils of implacable hostility on one side and casual supremacism on the other.

First and Second Ages: The Three Houses of the Edain

Much of the action of *The Silmarillion* revolves around the doings of the Three Houses of the Edain, the first Men to enter the west of Middle-earth, and the staunchest allies of the Elves in their war against Morgoth. As

their reward, the Edain are granted in the Second Age the island of Númenor; essentially, I shall suggest, a proxy Britain. We may, then, ask how far the Three Houses may be identified with the historical peoples of early-medieval Europe.

The greatest of the Three Houses, that of Hador Goldenhead, is stereotypically Germanic: 'of great strength and stature … bold and steadfast, quick to anger and to laughter … yellow-haired and blue-eyed … tall and warlike … '. Indeed, their chieftain Húrin makes his last stand in Viking style, 'wield[ing] an axe two-handed'.[32] His brother Huor dies in the same battle from an arrow-shot to the eye; though, in another alternative history of the Battle of Hastings, his descendants are the later Kings of Men.[33]

The Haladin, or Folk of Haleth, come closer to the Romantic ideal of Celticity. They 'delighted in solitude, wandering free in the greenwoods'. They suffer from 'Celtic' melancholy; 'their time was brief and their days unhappy'. They are 'sundered in speech' from the other Edain.[34] In a later essay, a branch of the Haladin are the ancestors of the Dunlendings of the Third Age, who are, as we will see, clearly crypto-Celtic.[35] But there are Germanic connections also. Their eponymous heroine Haleth's name recalls Old English *hæleð* 'hero' (German *Held*, etc.). They coalesce as a people only when besieged in 'the angle of land between [the rivers] Ascar and Gelion';[36] as Shippey has observed, such confluences in Tolkien may be symbolic recapitulations of the angle between the Flensburg Fjord and the River Schlei, the homeland of the Angles before their coming to England.[37] We should, then, see the Folk of Haleth as 'Anglo-Celts', with affinities both Celtic and English.

The third House, the People of Bëor, is arguably the most 'Celtic' of all. They are 'dark or brown of hair … long in memory … moved sooner to pity than to laughter'. They settle in Dorthonion, a 'great highland … where lay many tarns at feet of bare tors'. Within Britain, this description matches only Cumbria, part of the *Hen Ogledd*, or Old North, the Celtic enclave in what is now northern England and southern Scotland. The most prominent Bëorian, Beren, as a young man lives out the archetypal Celtic run-to-the-hills narrative of doomed resistance, amid suitable scenery: 'a desperate band … they retreated to the barren highland … among the tarns and rocky moors … Their bed was the heather and their roof the cloudy

sky'.[38] As we have noted, the love-story of Beren and Lúthien echoes the Celtic motif of marriage between mortal man and immortal female.

After Beren, the most prominent Bëorian is Morwen Eledhwen, 'proudest and most beautiful of mortal women'.[39] Morwen is a typically complex figure. On one level, she is very much a figure of Tolkien's generation; a young wife whose soldier-husband goes missing in action, leaving her with one young child and another on the way. But she has also Celtic and Anglo-Saxon links. In stereotypically Celtic fashion, she is rumoured among her enemies to be 'a witch skilled in magic'. Her name suggests the Welsh *morwyn*, 'young woman, maid', which Tolkien is likely to have known from the Welsh Bible's account of the Annunciation (Luke 1:26–7): ' … *anfonwyd yr angel Gabriel oddi wrth Dduw … At forwyn … ac enw y forwyn oedd Mair*.' Her surname Elfsheen, 'Elven-beautiful', is, as Tolkien points out, in its Old English form *ælfsciene* applied to the biblical Sarah and Judith, both in Catholic theology types of the Blessed Virgin.[40] Likewise the description of her as 'most beautiful of mortal women' may recall the biblical *pulcerrima mulierum* (Song of Songs 5:9, 17), in Catholic exegesis interpreted with reference to Mary.[41] Here the combination of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon elements helps us see Morwen as a Marian figure; a *mater dolorosa*, reviled by lesser men, but a channel of beauty and grace nonetheless.

The Second Age: Númenor

In the Second Age the Edain remove to Númenor. We have suggested that Númenor is itself a crypto-Britain. Like the Britain promised by Lloyd George to Tolkien's generation, it is meant to be a country fit for heroes. Its topography is distinctly British. The northern promontory of the Forostar—'the least fertile part; stony, with few trees, [and] high heather-covered moors'—is evidently Scotland. The eastern Orrostar, the south-eastern Hyarrostar, and the south-western Hyarnustar correspond respectively to East Anglia, Kent, and Cornwall. The western Andustar, then, is Wales, even being 'rocky in its northern parts' but with valleys in the south.[42] In one telling, its inhabitants are descendants of the People of Bëor who have adopted the Sindar language.[43] On this account at least the

Númenórean Wales is home to a crypto-Celtic people, speaking a variety of p-Elvish. Over the Second Age as a whole, however, the distinctions between the various Houses fade. By the Third Age they appear lost altogether.

In Tolkien's First and Second Ages, then, we find a series of alternative histories, in which crypto-Celts elvish and human interact with other nations round about. The stories with the happiest endings are those in which the parties intermarry, interbreed, and integrate. We turn now to other alternative histories, this time from Tolkien's Third Age.

The Third Age: The Dunlendings, the Bree-folk, and the Bucklanders

So far, our concerns have been mainly with the more 'ideational' versions of Celticism. In the Third Age the more 'historical' aspects become prominent. This is most notable in the case of the Dunlendings, the inhabitants of Dunland, the 'Brown Lands' towards the south-west of Middle-earth. Within *The Lord of the Rings*, the Dunlendings are effectively defined by their relationship to the Rohirrim. These are, as we have noted, Anglo-Saxons by other means, more specifically, Mercians: the people of the English West Midlands, including the Marches or English/Welsh borders.[44] It is in the west of the Mark that we first encounter the Dunlendings. During the siege of the Hornburg, the old earl Gamling calls Éomer's attention to the voices of the 'wild men of the hills' marshalled against them:

> 'I hear them,' said Éomer; 'but they are only the scream of wild birds and the bellowing of beasts to my ears.'
>
> 'Yet there are many that cry in the Dunland tongue,' said Gamling. 'I know that tongue … an ancient speech of Men, [once] spoken in many western valleys … "Death to the Forgoil! Death to the Strawheads! Death to the robbers of the North!" Not in half a thousand years have they forgotten their grievance that the lords of Gondor gave the Mark to Éorl the Young … '[45]

Gamling and Éomer are, at this point, looking out over a valley called the Deeping Coomb, a hybrid Germanic/Welsh toponym (Welsh *cwm*, etc.). Tolkien may well have known the suggestion found in the *Oxford English*

Dictionary that the Celtic form remained in use after the Saxon conquests, reinforced by a folk etymology linking it to Old English *cumb* 'basin, bowl, deep vessel', and 'strengthened, after the Norman Conquest, by … F[rench] *combe* "petite vallée" … for which a Celtic origin has also been claimed'.[46] If so, the place-name exemplifies perfectly the interweaving of linguistic and cultural elements so often found in Tolkien's own work. Elsewhere we learn that Dunlendish was once widely spoken in the west of Middle-earth, but now 'only in Dunland did Men of this race hold to their old speech and manners: a secret folk, unfriendly … ' and 'swarthy and dark-haired' to boot.[47] The Dunlendings, then, are easily identified with the Welsh, seen, by Éomer, from a stereotypically *Saesneg* perspective; short, dark, embittered, and perennially incomprehensible. But it is Gamling—older, wiser, and bilingual—who is the more authoritative voice here, with its undertone of sympathy and regret.

From the Dunlendings we turn to the Bree-folk. Bree-land, in the north-west of Middle-earth, is 'a small inhabited region, like an island in the empty lands … there was Staddle … Combe in a deep valley … and Archet on the edge of the Chetwood'. The Men of Bree were 'brown-haired, broad, and rather short … According to their own tales they were … the descendants of the first Men who ever wandered into the West of the middle-world'.[48] Their place-names are distinctive, being, as has long been recognized, represented by Celtic: Bree is equivalent to Welsh *bre*, 'hill'; Archet is, as Tolkien noted, 'from British **ar(e)cait* … Welsh *argoed* ('trees, edge of forest').'[49] Chetwood is a British-English hybrid (Welsh *coed*, 'wood'). Combe we have already encountered. Staddle (Old English *staōol*, 'foundation') represents a now-familiar element of admixture. The Celtic toponyms stretch down to the Sarn Ford (Welsh *sarn*, 'causeway') on the borders of the Shire. They echo, in fact, names that would be familiar to Tolkien: there is a Combe in Oxfordshire, and a Brill (< *Bre-hyll*) and a Chetwode in nearby Buckinghamshire.[50] The Bree-folk belong to the same loose group of peoples as the Dunlendings;[51] but unlike them, they are cheerful, self-sufficient survivors.

Our last crypto-Celts are the hobbit-people of the Bucklanders. Buckland is 'a sort of colony from the Shire', established when 'Gorhendad Oldbuck … had crossed the river [Brandywine]' to create 'virtually a small independent country'. The Bucklanders are descended

from the tribe of the Stoors, who spoke a language ‘related to Dunlendish’—that is, a crypto-Celtic language. Indeed, ‘they had a style that we should perhaps feel vaguely to be “Celtic”’, exemplified in the names Meriadoc, son of Saradoc, and of Gorhendad (= Welsh ‘great-grandfather’) Oldbuck.[52] Buckland is divided from the Shire proper by the River Brandywine, in some drafts called the Malvern; Malvern being an English town, with a Celtic name, some thirty miles from the Welsh border.[53] Just inside Buckland is Crickhollow, whose name echoes that of Crickhowell/Crughywel, just inside Wales. Here, then, we have another alternative history, in which the Middle-earth analogue of Wales is inhabited not by a marginalized remnant, but by enterprising colonists. Like the Bree-folk, they preserve in their names a recollection of their past; but otherwise are ‘not very different’ from Shire-hobbits in general.

Two recurrent themes, then, emerge from our consideration of Tolkien’s crypto-Celts. First, there is the variety of relationships between them and other peoples. Thus against the hostility shown by Eöl or Thingol towards the Noldor, or by the Dunlendings towards the Rohirrim, we may set the warm relations between the People of Bëor and the House of Hador, or between the Bucklanders and the Shire-hobbits. Second, there is the frequent blurring of lines between ethnic groups. This is typified by the mysterious were-bear Beorn, first encountered in *The Hobbit*. Beorn’s favourite place is a rock called ‘the Carrock’, a name over which Gandalf waxes philological: ‘He called it the Carrock, because … he calls things like this carrocks, and this one is *the* Carrock because it is the only one near his home.’[54] As Burns points out, this name suggests Welsh *carreg*, Irish/Scots Gaelic *carraig*, and so on, and Beorn’s words, ‘The day will come when they shall perish and I shall go back!’ echo stereotypical Celtic laments against usurping incomers.[55] Beorn’s name, however, is Germanic; as Burns notes, he belongs also to Germanic traditions of bee-boys, skin-shifters, and berserkers. Even his ‘Carrock’ is ambiguous, looking like an anglicization of *carreg* (‘carr-rock’) rather than a purely Celtic form.[56] Particularly notable here is Tolkien’s curiosity over Sigmund Feist’s suggestion, first advanced in 1910, that the sound changes described by Grimm’s Law (giving such correspondence sets as Latin *pater*, Greek *patēr*, English *father*, or Latin *fores*, Greek *thura*, English *door*) were the product of a Celtic substrate, itself the result of intermarriage between proto-Celtic and proto-Germanic speakers.

Tolkien's annotations of his copies of Feist's *Indogermanen und Germanen* (1924) and *Germanen und Kelten in der antiken Überlieferung* (1927) are, unfortunately, all but illegible, but are enough to show his engagement with the theory.[57] The border between the Celtic and Germanic worlds is never a neat one.

Crypto-Romans

We began our consideration of 'crypto-Celts' in Tolkien by considering the stereotypical features of a Celtic population as visualized in early-twentieth-century Britain. A similar list for the Romans would contain a broad streak of imperialism, lending itself to identification with the British Empire. Such identifications were, of course, widespread in Tolkien's youth, and may reflect positively on imperialists Roman and British. They may be seen as benevolent, builders and legislators, benefactors of both their subjects and posterity in general. Alternatively, they may be arrogant and avaricious, prone, in Edwardian discourse, to decadence, decline, and fall.[58] While there are various 'crypto-Celts' in Tolkien's legendarium, there is only one group that is clearly 'crypto-Roman', namely the Númenóreans. We have seen them before as the descendants of the Three Houses of Men, living on a crypto-British island raised up at heaven's command as a refuge from the wars of Middle-earth. The Númenóreans in their later dealings with the Men of Middle-earth go through the classic imperialist cycle. At first they are bringers of civilization, who 'instructed Men in the sowing of seed and the grinding of grain … and in the ordering of their life … '. They then become decadent and domineering, '[appearing] rather as lords and masters … than as helpers and teachers'. The last stage is the downfall of the island itself, brought about largely through their own imperial conquests. The 'Faithful'—a remnant of the people who remained in friendship with the Elves—escape the downfall of Númenor, and return to Middle-earth.

The subsequent history of the Númenórean realms is, as Ford and others have noted, largely a reprise of the history of the Roman Empire.[59] A single Númenórean empire is divided into a north-western kingdom, Arnor, and a south-eastern kingdom, Gondor. As with the constitutional dispositions of the later Roman Empire, the full legalities of this division

are never quite fixed. The north-western portion is then further divided into petty kingdoms, which are slowly destroyed by wars civil and external; only the royal line and a handful of Númenórean nobility ('the Rangers') survive, dispossessed of lands and titles. The south-eastern realm of Gondor endures, though the royal line lapses and its territories are gradually diminished.[60]

By the end of the Third Age, then, a late- or sub-Roman situation obtains. We may see this particularly through the numerous references to buildings and structures surviving in Númenórean areas. Tolkien's philological training would have made him familiar with the linguistic legacy of Roman infrastructure in Britain; one thinks of such Welsh words derived from Latin as *pont* 'bridge', *tŵr* 'tower', *castell* 'castle', and *gwal* 'wall' (perhaps a borrowing from Old English), or the Old English *stræt*, *ceaster*, *torr*, and *weall*. He would have known also Gildas' references (*De Excidio* 18) to a stone wall and to a chain of towers built by the Romans; and how the poet of *The Wanderer* (lines 75ff) reflects on the 'middle-earth' he sees about him, with 'walls hoary with rime' ('*weallas … hrime behrorene*') and 'snow-swept dwelling-places' ('*hryðge … ederas*') by which 'the warrior-band all fell' ('*duguþ eal gecrong*'). We shall see also what use Tolkien made of another Exeter Book poem, namely *The Ruin*, thought by some to be a meditation on the remains of Roman Bath.[61]

The perspective of a late- or sub-Roman landscape, as seen by indigenes or later settlers, is introduced by degrees. Readers of *The Lord of the Rings* learn early on that the hobbit settlement of the Shire dates from the time when the brothers Marcho and Blanco gained leave from the king of Arnor to cross 'the Bridge of Stonebows … built in the days of the power of the North Kingdom', being required only to 'keep the Great Bridge in repair, and all other bridges and roads … and acknowledge [the king's] lordship'.[62] Now the names of Marcho and Blanco echo the Old English *mearh* and *blanca* ('horse' and '(white) horse'), and so recall the legendary Anglo-Saxon settlers Hengest and Horsa ('stallion' and 'horse').[63] The Bridge of Stonebows—of stone arches, that is—suggests a Roman structure, as of course does the reference to roads.[64] Like the Anglo-Saxons, the Shire-hobbits are aware of the grass-grown ruins of an imperial city, Fornost Erain or Kings' Norbury.[65] Like many sub-Roman peoples, they continued to observe the 'essential laws' of the former

power, ‘because they were The Rules … both ancient and just’.[66] This is, then, an alternative history of the settlement of the Shire/England. Marcho and Blanco and their following are like *foederati* in the later Empire, granted lands and freedom, but still owing allegiance to Númenor/Rome.

The post-Roman theme does not end there. Thus Frodo and friends, travelling east from the Shire, glimpse to the north ‘a long dark line’, which gradually resolves itself into ‘a deep dike with a steep wall on the other side’. Their guide, Tom Bombadil, tells them it ‘had once been the boundary of a kingdom, but a very long time ago’, and ‘seem[s] to remember something sad about it’.[67] Later, east of Bree, they find that the hills ‘made an undulating ridge, often rising almost to a thousand feet … [with] the remains of green-grown walls and dikes … the ruins of old works of stone … ’. Here Aragorn explains: ‘The Men of the West … in their latter days … defended the hills for a while … This path was made to serve the forts along the wall.’[68] The topography strongly recalls that of Hadrian’s Wall, even down to the location of the *vallum* on the southern, inward side of the wall.[69]

Further south also there are crypto-Roman structures. The fortress of Helm’s Deep in Rohan is screened by ‘high walls of ancient stone’, erected by the Men of Gondor of old.[70] This fortification is ‘twenty feet high, and so thick that four men could walk abreast along the top … the great stones … set with such skill that no footholds could be found at its joints’. Again, this appears to be a reworking of Hadrian’s Wall, of similar masonry and dimensions.[71] To the Men of Rohan, these walls are ‘built … with the hands of giants’; for Tolkien, the obvious parallel is the phrase ‘*enta (ær)geweorc*’, ‘the (ancient) work of giants’, found in *The Ruin* (line 2), *The Wanderer* (87), and *Andreas* (1235, 1495), to describe ruined buildings, presumably Roman.[72]

Nearby is the former Númenórean fortress of Isengard, which Gandalf and company approach along a recognizably Roman road: a ‘wide street, paved with great flat stones, squared and laid with skill … Deep gutters … ran on either side’. A central tower is surrounded by a stone enceinte, pierced by ‘a great arch delved in the southern wall’. The scene that greets the travellers at Isengard is again ‘*enta geweorc*’, ‘the work of ents’, but in another sense; for Tolkien’s Ents, the Shepherds of the Trees, have assaulted the town, and laid it low: ‘The doors lay hurled and twisted on

the ground … stone, cracked and splintered into countless jagged shards, was scattered far and wide … The great arch still stood, but opened now upon a roofless chasm … [the] towers were beaten into dust.'[73] The setting is dramatically reminiscent of *The Ruin*:

> *Hrofas sind gehrorene, hreorge torras,*
> *hringeat berofen, hrim on lime;*
> *scearde scurbeorge scorene, gedrorene,*
> *ældo undereotone …*
> *… Forþon þas hofu dreorgiað,*
> *ond þæs teaforgeapa tigelum sceadeð*
> *hrostbeames rof.* (lines 3–6, 29–31)
> Roofs are in ruin, towers destroyed,
> Broken the arched gate, rime on the plaster,
> walls gape, torn up, destroyed,
> consumed by age …
> And so these halls are desolate,
> and this arch of red stone sheds its tiles,
> the ceiling of the pillared vault.[74]

Apart from the obvious overlaps here—the ruined gates, arches, towers, and roofs—the very name of Isengard's tower of Orthanc recalls the '*orþonc*' or 'cunning mind' which first devised *The Ruin*'s city.[75] Even the general scene, with 'wide pools … trickling over the stones', leaving 'the ring beyond filled with steaming water', is effectively a transposition of the last lines of *The Ruin*, with 'hot streams [running] over hoary stone' ('*ofer h[arn]e stan hate streamas*') into the *hringmere* or ring-pool. There are also similarities to the classical city of Mermedonia in *Andreas*, with its 'stone-paved streets' ('*stræte stanfage*', 1236), and 'no little columns' ('*sweras unlytle*', 1493). The Mermedonians are anthropophagous (*Andreas* 19–25, 148–60), as are the Orcs of Isengard;[76] and their city, like Isengard, all but destroyed by a subterranean inundation. Tolkien's use of language and imagery from these poems invites us to view Isengard as a crypto-Roman city, seen from an Anglo-Saxon perspective.

Gondor proper is similarly late Roman.[77] Its capital, Minas Tirith, is, as Pippin sees it, a 'great stone city … falling … into decay … over whose

… arched gates were carved many fair letters of strange and ancient shapes'.[78] Frodo and Sam travel on another 'Roman' road, with its 'straight sure flight and level course', occasionally 'leap[ing] over a stream upon a wide shapely arch of enduring masonry', before 'dwindl[ing] to a country cart-track', with only 'a broken pillar here and there … or old paving-stones'.[79] Another lost Númenórean road runs through the Drúadan Forest, by which the 'Wild Man' Ghân-buri-Ghân leads the Riders of Rohan to break the siege of Minas Tirith ('Many paths were made when Stonehouse-folk were stronger … ').[80] The Riders themselves may be read as a crypto-British Expeditionary Force, their campaign culminating in the cavalry breakthrough that proved so elusive on the Somme.[81] But the overgrown stone road, remembered only by 'backward' natives, is clearly analogous to many such roads in sub-Roman Britain.

The 'crypto-Roman' structures considered here are all beautiful, or useful, or both; useful, that is, in the service of the good. Thus the Númenórean fortress of Helm's Deep is held by the Rohirrim against the renegade wizard Saruman. The Númenórean road in Gondor guides Frodo and Sam on their quest to destroy the Ring. Númenórean works may be subject to change, decay, or outright corruption; so the fortress-town of Isengard, once a Lutyensesque garden city 'filled with avenues and groves of fruitful trees', becomes under Saruman a scene of hyper-classicizing grandiosity, its 'long lines of pillars, some of marble, some of copper and of iron' reminiscent of Mussolini's Rome or Hitler's Berlin.[82] Nonetheless, anything crypto-Roman is more likely to be good than bad. And the wider plot of *The Lord of the Rings* is, on our reading, an alternative history of the Roman world, in which the Empire is restored under a divinely sanctioned king from the north-west.

Crypto-Roman Catholics

This religious dimension is important. We have noted how the crypto-Britain of Númenor underwent a national apostasy, leaving only 'the Faithful' to preserve the old ways. These 'Faithful' we may identify with the Recusants, those Catholics who refused to conform after the English

Reformation. The same is true also of the Rangers, the Númenóreans who survive the fall of Arnor. Tom Bombadil's description of them—'sons of forgotten kings walking in loneliness, guarding from evil things folk that are heedless'—invites us to consider them in a religious light. To the Bree-folk they are 'mysterious wanderers … believed to have strange powers … [who] told strange forgotten tales which were eagerly listened to; but the[y] did not make friends of them'. In Gandalf's words, they are 'the last remnant in the North of the great people, the Men of the West'.[83] Elsewhere they are 'a remnant of the Dúnedain' or 'a remnant of the faithful'.[84] Tolkien would have known the biblical use of 'remnant' to refer to a portion of the Chosen People, preserved from a general catastrophe for the regeneration of the whole;[85] a trope readily adopted by English Catholics. The Rangers are, then, inheritors of an older spirituality, and guardians of their benighted, often hostile, countrymen.

Nor, I suggest, is this the only way in which Tolkien's Númenórean kingdoms in Middle-earth may be read as crypto-Romes. We have seen how the history of the hobbit settlement of the Shire recalls and reworks that of the Anglo-Saxon settlement in Britain. So also the crypto-Anglo-Saxon Rohirrim settle in the Empire as *foederati*, 'free men under their own kings and laws, but in perpetual alliance with Gondor'.[86] In each case, the crypto-Germanic settlements may be a symptom but are not a cause of decline for the imperial power, which rather gains loyal and peaceable subjects.

In each case also the restoration of the Númenórean monarchy in the person of Aragorn leads to a ratification of their status. This restoration is as much religious as political. Aragorn as king has powers of healing and blessing. His queen Arwen is another Mary figure.[87] Hence the situation at the end of *The Lord of the Rings* may be seen as a sketch for a new settlement between Rome and a Catholic England. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and the restoration of the English hierarchy in 1850 had aroused disquiet among Protestants, fearing a revival of Roman temporal claims, and among traditional Catholics, uneasy at the Ultramontane pretensions of Cardinal Wiseman and his fellow-bishops.[88] Tolkien had particular reason to be aware of anti-Catholicism, his mother having been shunned by her Protestant relatives when she converted; even his friend C.S. Lewis could, at times, make him feel (as he put it) like a

‘shabby little Catholic’.[89] And, having spent much of his adolescence at Newman’s Birmingham Oratory, he would have known also of the tensions within the English Church. In his alternative history, however, the settlement between England and Rome is marked by loyalty and trust, freely given on each side.

Other Works

The scope of this chapter has, of course, required us to exclude much. We might have considered Tolkien’s short story *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949), set ‘after the days of King Coel maybe, but before Arthur’, in ‘the valley of the Thames, with an excursion north-west to the walls of Wales’.[90] Giles’ primary associations are Germanic; his village is Ham, Old English *hām*, and his vainglorious dog Garm shares his name with the hell-hound of Norse mythology. But his full name—*Ægidius Ahenobarbus Julius Agricola de Hammo—suggests more exotic connections. ‘Giles’ is, by the late-nineteenth century, a stock name for a Wessex peasant-farmer, such as Giles Winterbourne in Hardy’s *The Woodlanders* (1897), or Giles Scroggins in the Wessex song *The Vly be on the Turmut*. There are further resonances both Oxonian and continental; Tolkien would have passed almost daily the Norman church of St Giles, dedicated to the Provençal St Giles or Aegidius, ‘born in Athens … of noble lineage and royal kindred’.[91] He would have known also of Aegidius the fifth-century Gallo-Roman warlord. Ahenobarbus (‘bronze-beard’) recalls the Roman *gens Ahenobarba*, with a nod to Oxford’s Brasenose College (*Collegium Aheni Nasi*). Julius recalls Julius Caesar, the first Roman to invade Britain, and Julius Agricola, the Roman governor celebrated by Tacitus. Agricola itself is just ‘farmer’, but further suggests Aergol Lawhir, the legendary sub-Roman king of Dyfed. Giles’ notional overlord Augustus Bonifacius Ambrosius Aurelianus Antoninus Pius et Magnificus, dux rex, tyrannus et basileus Mediterranearum Partium has similarly suggestive names. So, for instance, Ambrosius Aurelianus is, of course, a hero of the Romano-British resistance to Saxon invasion in writers from Gildas (*De Exicidio* 25) onwards, the Emrys Wledig of the Welsh tradition. Bonifacius is another name for Wynfrith, the Wessex-born ‘Apostle of the Germans’.[92] Both men’s names, then, hint at wider connections both within Britain and

beyond. Even the *Mediterraneae Partes*, normally the Mediterranean region, are equated with the English Midlands. Tolkien's tone is whimsical, but the point is serious; the English kingdoms were (as Bintley in this volume notes) never isolated from Roman or Romano-Celtic influence.

Likewise the red dragon Chrysophylax is obviously Welsh, but again with continental links; his name is Greek, he is described as being 'of ancient and imperial lineage', and his lair is another sub-Roman ruin, with 'brazen doors [that] swung on great pillars of iron … in the tombs and treasuries of mighty men and giants of old'. Following an unsuccessful incursion into Oxfordshire, Chrysophylax is captured by Giles, and kept as a prisoner-cum-status symbol. If this begins as a story about Anglo-Saxon resistance to Welsh aggression, it ends as an object lesson on the perils of imperialism: having paraded his dragon, King Giles (as he now is) finds him expensive to keep, and 'let[s] the poor worm go home … with … a pact of non-aggression on either side'. We have here at least the outline of an alternative history in which Celt and Saxon—both inheritors of the Graeco-Roman world—coexist more or less happily, so long as each respects the other's boundaries.

Conclusions

By way of conclusion, we may consider two texts which bookend Tolkien's main creative period. We referred at the outset to Tolkien's lecture *English and Welsh*, published in 1963 but delivered just after the appearance of the concluding book of *The Lord of the Rings* in 1955. Tolkien indeed refers to *The Lord* as 'contain[ing] … much of what I personally have received from the study of things Celtic', and stresses the importance of 'fusion and confusion' in the interaction between 'Teutons' and 'Celts'.[93] He is himself, he notes, 'not a German, though my surname is German … after 200 years the "blood" of Saxony and Poland is probably a negligible physical ingredient'.[94] Elsewhere he rejects the 'modern myth' that 'Celts and Teutons are primeval and immutable creatures, like a triceratops and a stegosaurus … fixed not only in shape but in innate and mutual hostility'.[95] It has been argued (by Chism 2003) that the Second World War served as a catalyst for his rejection of theories of racial type. Even

before the outbreak of war Tolkien was presumably aware of Pius XI's condemnation of '*de[r] sogenannte Mythus von Blut und Rasse*' in his encyclical *Mit brennende Sorge* (1937). Yet in the case of Celtic, Germanic, and Roman relations he would hardly have needed it. The values expressed in *English and Welsh* are implicit in all Tolkien's mature work. They may stem in part from the other work that bookends his career, namely G.K. Chesterton's *The Ballad of the White Horse* (1911), a mini-epic on Alfred's defeat of Guthrum's 'Great Heathen Horde' at Ethandune in 878. Chesterton presents this as a victory of 'Christian civilization' over 'heathen nihilism': 'I have', he says, 'summarised this first crusade in a triple symbol, and given to a fictitious Roman, Celt, and Saxon, a part in the glory.'[96] His Celt, Colan, exemplifies the Romantic stereotype. He 'dwel[ls] in a lost land', 'up in the crags of Wales'; his 'raiment' is 'tattered like autumn leaves'; he is 'darkling', 'moody and madly gay', and so forth. Yet he, along with the English Eldred and Mark 'the man from Italy', is one of the trinity of folk resisting Danish expansionism. Chesterton's vision of Celt, Roman, and Saxon uniting to defeat the forces of darkness is one implicitly echoed through Tolkien's fiction.[97]

We cannot conclude without considering the wider question of how far Tolkien's views on the relations of different peoples within the British Isles were typical of those of his place and time. Certainly the period when Tolkien produced the writing for which he is best known—roughly between the early 1930s and the early 1950s—was one in which a version of Britishness, as embodied in the institutions of state, was also at its peak. We may trace an arc from the formation of the National Government at the beginning of the Slump in 1931, through the Second World War and the establishment of the Welfare State, to the coronation of Elizabeth in 1953, as representing a shared narrative of British struggle, victory, and reconstruction: the Britishness of British Restaurants, of British Railways, of the British Iron and Steel Federation House.[98] Tolkien for his part abhorred the sheer stateism of it all, and distrusted the version of 'Britishness' on offer as 'disastrously confused by the maleficent interference of the Government with the usual object of governments: uniformity'.[99] Writing to his son Christopher in 1943, he declares that he 'love[s] England (not Great Britain and certainly not the British Commonwealth (grr!))', but even this English patriotism may be too dilute: 'I shall have to refuse to speak anything but Old Mercian.'[100]

Tolkien's depictions of crypto-Celts and their relations to others may, then, not be entirely typical of his own time. Nor may it be universally appealing. Celts are often relegated to supporting roles; thus, on a hostile reading, the (Welsh) Bree is just a one-pony town that one passes through, in autumn, on one's way to and from the (English) Shire. Certainly Tolkien often values assimilation over assertions of cultural difference. Yet as a philologist he knew that languages map imperfectly onto peoples. As an early-medievalist, he knew that folk wander, split, and merge. As a Catholic, he believed that we have on earth no abiding *civitas*, citizenship, or nationality.[101] 'But it is not your own Shire,' says Gildor Inglorion to Frodo Baggins. 'Others dwelt here before hobbits were; and others will dwell here again when hobbits are no more. The wide world is all about you: you can fence yourselves in, but you cannot for ever fence it out.' [102]

Philip Burton, *Alternative Histories: Crypto-Celts and Crypto-Romans in the Legendarium of J.R.R. Tolkien* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0010

[1] Farley and Hunter (2015) 17.

[2] For Tolkien's life, see Carpenter (1977); Garth (2003); Edwards (2014). To the burgeoning literature on his work, Shippey (2000 and 2005) are the best introductions.

[3] Tolkien (1963) 2.

[4] Key references may be found in Tolkien (1990) 219, 289, 319–20, 385. An oral tradition maintains that Tolkien once described Ireland as 'naturally evil', Burns (2005) 19. For brief but suggestive discussion, Ratecliff (2009).

[5] Scotland is not considered separately here. The Celtic-speaking southern counties of Scotland in the early Middle Ages are treated as part of the 'Old North', and the Gaelic-speaking west as part of the Irish cultural world.

[6] Chapman's argument suffers from being subordinated to the polemical thrust of his work as a whole. While there are similarities between his views and those advanced here, I differ in positing more than one crypto-Celtic population in Tolkien's work, and in emphasizing the importance for Tolkien of the blurring of lines between traditional ethnic groups. Chapman's reading of 'the West' in Tolkien seems to me to be too literalistic, not making enough allowance either for the range of 'Western' locations in Tolkien (including Númenor, Eldamar, Valinor, and the Gardens of Mandos), or for the fact that his legendarium concludes with a 'bent world' in which east and west no longer have any absolute value.

[7] Tolkien (2002) xvi–xvii.

[8] Shippey (2000) 161–8.

[9] See, e.g., Fimi (2010) 176–9. The question is more fully explored in Honegger (2011). Note also a Celtic connection: 'Rohan is a famous name, from Brittany, borne by an ancient proud and powerful family. I was aware of this … ' Tolkien (1990) 383.

[10] Tolkien (2002) 497. Merely being in Rohan is apparently enough to make speakers utter alliterative verse; compare Legolas' gnomic 'Rede oft is found at the rising of the sun', p. 419.

[11] Compare Tolkien's observations in *On Fairy-stories* (1975) 56: human story-making is a form of 'Sub-creation', participating in its degree in the divine action of creation. Reflecting in 1971 on his life's work, he considers the suggestion that he did not 'wr[i]te all that book [*The Lord of the Rings*] [him]self'; 'An alarming conclusion … not one that should puff any one up who considers the imperfections of "chosen instruments" … ' (1990) 413.

[12] Carpenter (1977) 134.

[13] On the *eucatastrophe* see Tolkien (1975) 67–9.

[14] Useful bibliographical orientation at http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199846719/obo-9780199846719%970025.xml, to which add Pittock (1999) and Chapman (1992).

[15] Tolkien (1990) 26.

[16] The p-Celtic/q-Celtic distinction is ubiquitous in the manuals; see e.g. Baldi (1983) 39–42.

[17] Tolkien (1990) 176.

[18] Fimi (2007) 62ff.

[19] Sindar distinguishes (*g*)*wath*, 'dim light', from shadows cast by objects (*morchaint*); Tolkien (1977) 359.

[20] Tolkien (1977) 55–6.

[21] Fimi (2007) 63.

[22] Tolkien (1977) 123.

[23] Tolkien (1977) 93.

[24] Tolkien (1977) 83.

[25] Tolkien (1977) 111–12. Celtic models of social organization vary, but Irish high-kings—often taken to reflect an older Celtic model—had a role much closer to Thingol's. Tolkien's contemporaries Dillon and Chadwick (1967) 95 put it thus: 'The inferior king … was bound to certain services … and the suzerain was, presumably, obliged to help in his own quarrels. But … in theory, at least, the over-king had no authority over the territory and peoples of his subordinate.' Such views remain current in more recent scholarship; see Wormald (2005) 585–8.

[26] See, e.g., Edwards (2014) 34–7, 54–7.

[27] Tolkien (1966) 2.

[28] Tolkien (1977) 117–19.

[29] Tolkien's earliest versions of the Fall of Gondolin, drafted around 1917, have clear contemporary allusions, featuring tank-like iron dragons; Garth (2003) 220–1.

[30] Tolkien (1977) 132–3.

[31] Tolkien (1977) 137–8.

[32] Tolkien (1977) 141, 148, 195.

[33] Compare Aragorn's father Arathorn, another descendant and ancestor of the Kings of Men, likewise 'slain by an orc-arrow that pierced his eye'; Tolkien (2002) 1032.

[34] Tolkien (1977) 145, 148, 142.

[35] Tolkien (2002) 314.

[36] Tolkien (1977) 146.

[37] Shippey (2000) 199. Compare *The Homecoming of Beorhtnoth*, where the English have come 'from Angel in the East', Tolkien (1975) 163. So also the crypto-English Rohirrim once dwelt 'between the confluence of Greylin and Langwell (where was their only fortified *burg*)', Tolkien (1982) 295.

[38] Tolkien (1977) 155.

[39] Tolkien (1977) 229.

[40] Tolkien (1990) 314.

[41] Matter (1990) especially 151ff.

[42] Tolkien (1982) 167. The sacred centre of the island, the Meneltarma and the city of Armenelos ('fairest of cities'), is also the geographical centre, just as Oxford is the centre of Britain in the tradition represented by the Middle Welsh *Cyfranc Lludd a Llefelys*. Likewise the capital Rómenna and the chief port of Andúnië correspond respectively to London and Bristol.

[43] Tolkien (1982) 235.

[44] Shippey (2000) 191–2.

[45] Tolkien (2002) 524. Prof. Esmonde-Cleary suggests to me that there may be a reminiscence of Felix's *Life of Guthlac* 24, where the saint is assailed in his sleep by a band of British-speaking demons. Tolkien references this episode himself in his essay 'English and Welsh' (1963). For Bintley's discussion of Guthlac's 'British' demons, see 47–8 of this volume.

[46] *Oxford English Dictionary*, s. v. coomb^2; suggestion in Hammond and Scull (2014) 150. Tolkien may have encountered the *combe/cwm* equation in Hilaire Belloc's *The Path to Rome*; Belloc (1902) 147.

[47] Tolkien (2002) 1103–4.

[48] Tolkien (2002) 146.

[49] Hammond and Scull (2014) 16 (Bree), 150 (Chetwood).

[50] Of course both elements are common elsewhere. The fuller name 'Bree under Bree-hill' suggests Breedon-on-the-Hill, 'Hill-hill on the hill' (Leicestershire), a site doubtless known to Tolkien for its unique collection of Anglo-Saxon sculpture; another hybrid Celtic/Germanic name.

[51] Tolkien (2002) 1103.

[52] Hammond and Scull (2014) 114. Quotations from Tolkien (2002): 'a sort of colony', p. 96; Stoors, p. 6; Dunlendish, p. 1104; vaguely Celtic, p. 1109. Compare 'The Appendix on Languages', in C. Tolkien (2002) 50: 'Buckland … occupied a position … such as Wales does to England.' Meriadoc's father Saradoc was originally called Caradoc (C. Tolkien (2002) 103), a name with Arthurian (and other) resonances; Burton (2011) 92. For its similarity to the standard Welsh form of Caractacus, see Hall in this volume, 142.

[53] C. Tolkien (2002) 39.

[54] Tolkien (1966) 106–7.

[55] Burns (2005) 39.

[56] As with *coomb*, the picture is complex. The *Oxford English Dictionary* cites Old English *stānrocc* as a glossary form, but suggests that the modern 'rock' is a much later borrowing from Romance. Skeat in his *Etymological Dictionary* had suggested the Romance forms were themselves borrowings from Celtic. *Carr* is given by the *OED* as 'Old Northumbrian', attested only in one place-name and two instances in the Lindisfarne Gospels, glossing *petra*; an ulterior Celtic etymology is not excluded.

[57] See Keyser (2012).

[58] See Hingley (2000), especially 29–33.

[59] Ford (2005); Hammond and Scull (2014) 689.

[60] It follows that the southern kingdom is essentially analogous to Byzantium, a line of thought developed by Librán Moreno (2011).

[61] Text of *The Ruin* and *The Wanderer* from Klinck (1992); translation adapted from Eachard, from http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/sechard/oeruin.htm (accessed 6 January 2017), in the light of Klinck's notes.

[62] Tolkien (2002) 4.

[63] Shippey (2005) 102. Fisher (2008) notes that Marcho may be from other Germanic sources than Old English *mearh*, quoting Skeat's suggestion that these words are 'cognate with (if not borrowed from)' Celtic terms such as Irish *marc* or Welsh *march*; and that Blanco, while Germanic in origin (cf. Old English *blanca*), is more reminiscent of the French borrowing of the word (*blanc, blanche*). We may add that 'Blanco' was, to many of Tolkien's fellow-veterans of the Great War, familiar as a product used for cleaning one's webbing belt, and that marching and blanco-ing were two activities often remembered by old soldiers without affection.

[64] Compare Galliazzo vol. 1 (1993) 396–7. On Roman roads in Tolkien, Shippey (2005) 30–4.

[65] The name conceals a Birmingham connection; Tolkien grew up within a mile or two of Kings Norton.

[66] Tolkien (2002) 9.

[67] Tolkien (2002) 134, 143.

[68] Tolkien (2002) 180–1.

[69] On the history of the *vallum* problem, see references in Hingley (2012).

[70] Tolkien (2002) 516.

[71] The original dimensions of Hadrian's Wall have been variously estimated; typically around fifteen feet for the higher portions. The existence of a walkway was widely assumed in the twentieth century. See further Hingley (2012) 295ff, and Hingley's contribution to this volume.

[72] See Gilliver, Marshall, and Weiner (2006) 120. My debt here to Bintley's chapter in this volume will be obvious.

[73] Tolkien (2002) 540–2.

[74] Text from Klinck (1992), translation adapted from Eachard, from http://faculty.arts.ubc.ca/sechard/oeruin.htm (accessed 6 January 2017), in the light of Klinck's notes.

[75] Further parallels: Isengard is thrice described as 'dreary'; compare '*dreorgiað*' in *The Ruin* 29; the 'shards' of stone echo *The Ruin*'s '*scearde*' (5); Saruman's emblem of the White Hand is 'stained with red'; compare '*readfah*' in *The Ruin* 10.

[76] See Tolkien (2002) 436: ‘The Hand that gives us man’s-flesh to eat’.

[77] See Ford (2005), who develops the suggestion that *The Lord of the Rings* represents ‘an early medieval myth of a restored Roman Empire’. I largely agree with Ford’s findings, but would see *The Lord* as representing an alternative history which not only might have happened, but which might yet happen; and secondly, as I argue, I see Tolkien’s restored Rome as religious rather than political. Tolkien indeed says as much in his letters: writing to Christopher Tolkien in 1944 he insists that he ‘should have hated the Roman Empire in its day (as I do)’ and to Charlotte and Denis Plimmer (two interviewers) in 1967 that *The Lord of the Rings* ends with something ‘like the re-establishment of an effective Holy Roman Empire with its seat in Rome’; Tolkien (1990) 89, 376.

[78] Tolkien (2002) 736.

[79] Tolkien (2002) 635.

[80] Tolkien (2002) 814.

[81] On Tolkien’s service as a cavalryman early in the War, see Garth (2003) 24.

[82] See especially Tolkien (2002) 541.

[83] Tolkien (2002) 142 (Tom Bombadil), 146 (Bree-folk), 215 (Gandalf).

[84] Tolkien (2002) 4, 1016.

[85] Sense A.2.e s. v. ‘remnant’ in the *Oxford English Dictionary*. For biblical examples, see, e.g., 2Kings 9:31, Isaiah 10:21–2, Jeremiah 23:3, Romans 11:5. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1913 (typical of the mainstream Catholicism Tolkien grew up with) uses the word three times in its article on ‘England (since the Reformation)’. On the *lāf* in Old English poetry, see Portnoy (2005).

[86] Tolkien (2002) 1045.

[87] Arwen’s associations with Mary seem to have been overlooked; a summary seems in order. When she and Aragorn first meet, she is wearing a ‘mantle of silver and blue’, Tolkien (2002) 1033, characteristic of the iconography of Mary. She is arguably ‘the fairest lady that lives’ (953), and hence shares Mary’s title of *pulcerrima mulierum*. Her surname Evenstar recalls Mary’s title of ‘morning star’; both ‘stars’ being, of course, the planet Venus.

[88] On Catholicism in nineteenth-century England, see Chadwick (1970) 401–22.

[89] Carpenter (1978) 51–2.

[90] Cited here as Tolkien (1983). Dramatic dating, viii; Giles’ full name, 1; Augustus Bonifacius’ name, 15; Chrysophyalax’s lair, 63–4; conclusion, 82.

[91] Jacobus da Varagine, *Legenda Aurea*, Caxton’s translation, cited from https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/goldenlegend/(accessed 4 September 2018). On Caxton’s translation as a possible source for Tolkien, see Ford (2011).

[92] Birzer (2003) 79–80 even claims Wynfrith/Boniface as a model for Tolkien’s Gandalf, citing Tolkien’s influential fellow-Catholic medievalist Christopher Dawson (1889–1970)’s description of him as having had ‘a deeper influence on the history of Europe than any other Englishman who has ever lived’. Tolkien may well have agreed, but would not have needed Dawson for the insight; despite the considerable similarity in the two men’s views of history, it is hard to demonstrate direct influence of Dawson on Tolkien. On Dawson’s wider place in twentieth-century Catholic apologetic history, see Wood (2013) 270–4.

[93] Tolkien (1963) 1, 9.

[94] Tolkien (1963) 10.

[95] Tolkien (1963) 12.

[96] Compare Chesterton's summary of the situation at the time of Augustine of Canterbury's mission, in his *Short History of England* (1917) 34: 'St. Augustine … did not see any ethnological problems … The names of these [English] kings were mostly what we call Teutonic names; but those who write the … records … apparently did not ask, whether the populations were in this sense of unmixed blood … [I]f [the missionaries] moved among pure Anglo-Saxons they had not the gratification of knowing it.'

[97] Some obvious echoes of this poem in *The Lord of the Rings*: the White Horse is the symbol of Wessex in Chesterton, and of Rohan in Tolkien; Alfred leads his men into battle with a 'star' on his forehead, as does Aragorn; the *Ballad* ends with 'The Scouring of the Horse', whereas the anti-climax of *The Lord* is 'The Scouring of the Shire'. See further Clausen (1974).

[98] For a mainstream statement of this view, see Ward (2004), especially 107ff: 'The new health service and *nationalised* (rather than socialised) industries were deliberately labelled "national" or "British".'

[99] Tolkien (1963) 25.

[100] Tolkien (1990) 65. Compare his self-description as 'one of the English of Mercia'; Tolkien (1963) 1.

[101] Hebrews 13:14: '*non enim habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futuram inquirimus*' ('For we have not here a lasting city, but we seek one that is to come.').

[102] Tolkien (2002) 82. I am grateful to the Press's readers and to colleagues in Birmingham for comments on a draft version of this chapter. It is a pleasure to thank also Mr P. Bibire, Dr B. Fannon, Dr A. Hall, Ms A. Holding, and Fr A. Talbot, for conversations over the years on matters covered in it. I alone am responsible for its shortcomings.

11

Hadrian's Wall

An Allegory for British Disunity

Richard Hingley

Introduction

In 2000 I led a group of undergraduate students on a field trip to Hadrian's Wall.[1] We visited the Roman fort at Housesteads in the central section on Whin Sill and stood on the northern ramparts looking beyond, outside the limits of the lands defined by this monumental Roman frontier work. I overheard one of the students say to another, with a slight sense of wonder, 'Look, that is Scotland.' I interrupted with the stock archaeological reply that this prospect is actually northern Northumberland, which is part of England rather than Scotland: Scotland lies somewhere beyond. Hadrian's Wall is often drawn upon in the media and by members of the public to represent an Anglo-Celtic or English–Scottish border. Individuals who specialize in the Roman frontiers are always keen to point out the errors in this idea. First, the Wall is located some way to the south of the English–Scottish border (Fig. 11.1).

Fig. 11.1. A map of Britain showing the location of Hadrian's Wall, the Antonine Wall, York, London, and the national boundary between England and Scotland. Drawn by Christina Unwin.

Second, the kingdoms (and subsequent countries) of England and Scotland did not exist when this frontier was constructed and manned during the early-second century AD. Third, this Wall was the north-west boundary of what we might term today a transnational empire; one that held down lands across what is now Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.[2] When in use as a manned frontier monument, Hadrian's Wall did not clearly separate one nation from another. In fact, it did not necessarily

separate ‘barbarians’ from Romans. Although the Wall is often viewed as the frontier of the Empire, Roman forts were maintained beyond its line, which may not actually have formed the legal boundary of Roman lands.

The post-Roman life of the Wall up to 2012 is explored in my book, *Hadrian’s Wall: A Life*.[3] This chapter focuses upon a number of recent political reflections on the Wall in a range of media and aims to address the historical roots of the idea of what I title here the ‘English Wall’, and the difficulty of this association between Hadrian’s Wall and Englishness/Scottishness. One issue that is central to this chapter is the extent to which people on both sides of the Wall identify the current population of Scotland as Celtic. It appears that the literal use of this idea, while still present, does not remain dominant in the accounts explored here. In the Introduction to this volume it is suggested that the term Celtic can be applied to the (real or imagined) pre-Roman inhabitants of Britain and their descendants, although archaeologists and others have substantial problems with simple ideas of genetic continuity.[4] These ambiguities help to account for the anomalous status of the concept of the Celt in the UK today, which is addressed further in the final section of this chapter.

To provide a further complication, the linking of the Wall to the northern boundary of England is an origin myth with ancient roots.[5] This idea of the ‘English Wall’ is a deeply sedimented concept with a lengthy genealogy, dating back to medieval times.[6] Antiquaries, artists, and politicians have, for centuries, drawn upon the idea of the Wall’s ruination and re-building to support and contest the idea of the division or the unity of the territories (and peoples) located to either side of its line.[7] This chapter explores the allegorical role of this Roman frontier monument in the definition of England, Scotland, and the ‘United Kingdom’. In many of the sources referenced below, this famous and monumental frontier structure and its landscape have become symbolic of the territorial and conceptual boundary of Englishness. This political and cultural role has very little to do with the original purpose, location, or context of the Roman Wall; rather it has to do with the afterlife of the monument, the ways that later peoples have called upon these physical remains to justify their beliefs about the ancestry of their nation. Modern reflections on national self-definition mediated through the Wall have a lengthy genealogy that warrants discussion.

Ideas about the metaphorical and physical re-building of the Wall have arisen at various times since the late-sixteenth century and usually when the relationship between the kingdoms or countries of England and Scotland have been strained; at times when relationships across the border have been more cordial the focus has commonly been upon the Wall's ruination.[8] The use of this Roman frontier monument to reflect on nationhood draws directly upon a genealogical focus on the Wall as an ancestral work which defined the territorial identity of people living to its south.[9] This idea, whether it is intended literally, rhetorically, and/or satirically, imagines Hadrian's Wall as a physical, or a metaphorical, impediment to movement across its line; it works conceptually to define the identities of people by means of the Wall's monumentality and border location. This tradition derives from the Roman and early-medieval conception of the Wall as a division between barbarians to the north and civil populations to the south. It is also an idea that continues to make little sense to people living within the lands along the line of the ruined Wall.

The original and most powerful source of this idea is a reference in a fourth-century work, the *Historia Augusta* (*de vita Hadriani* XI, 2) that records that Hadrian 'built a wall for eighty miles, which was to separate the barbarians from the Romans'.[10] The early-medieval writers Gildas and Bede drew upon this conception, creating a historical tradition that associated barbarism with the lands to the north and civilization with people to the south.[11] Hadrian's Wall has lived on as a physical monument and symbol into subsequent ages. Its ruins have been drawn upon metaphorically and allegorically to reflect on the passing of time and the identities of the peoples of Britain. Its popularity has waxed and waned, often according to the political relationships of the people living to its north and south. The concept of 'debatable lands' is derived from the medieval history of the contested borderlands between England and Scotland through which the Wall ran.[12] This term has also been used in literary studies to address intellectual territories in which property rights are not firmly established.[13] The Act of Union of 1707 aimed to unite Scotland and England, although the Wall has continued to be used at particular times as a dividing line between civilization and barbarity.[14] Scotland has often been portrayed as a 'Celtic' nation, contrasting this

with the supposedly Germanic origins of the English.[15] Despite the idea that the English are descended from Angles and Saxons, Classical Rome has long provided a strong alternative myth of origins for people lying to the south of Hadrian's Wall.[16]

The idea of 'insistent dualities' has been developed to account for the complexity of the images that have been inherited (or derived) from the Roman conquest.[17] Mary Beard and John Henderson ask:

> Is Roman Britain Roman or native? British or foreign? Part of the seamless web of 'our island story', or an ignominious period of enemy occupation? The origins of (European) 'civilization' on our shores, or an unpleasant, artificial intrusion that actually managed to postpone (British) 'civilization' for almost a thousand years? Can we avoid taking sides? And if not, whose side are we on?[18]

This notion of insistent dualities is characterized by opposing ideas about the past, many of which appear able to co-exist even in the mind of an individual.[19] The articulation of these dualities often seems to be related to the ways in which we understand our places in the present, and derives potency from the ambiguity of the concepts in Classical writings.[20] Ideas about the Iron Age and Roman pasts have long called upon the writings of Caesar, Tacitus, and Cassius Dio.[21] The conceptions derived from these accounts have changed substantially, over time, as a result of research and also due to changes in how people conceive of the world.[22] A knowledge of the pre-Roman and Roman past has gradually emerged that has been distanced from the Classical texts, although the descriptions included in these sources remain central to many current interpretations.[23]

Despite this, the Wall has been regularly drawn upon during the past seven years in newspaper journalism and in the social media as a means of separating England from Scotland.[24] This causes me to wonder if the newspaper reporters and members of the public that have drawn upon this (potentially) divisive idea actually know very much about the geography and history of the central and northern parts of the British Isles. Alternatively, have they drawn knowingly upon the powerful allegory of the 'English Wall' in order to make a political point? We should not, of course, take all references to the past in the media as literal.

This chapter also addresses the international context of this Roman frontier work, a concept that directly contradicts the long-term association

of the monument with the territorial limits of England and Scotland. Hadrian's Wall now forms part of the transnational 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site' and is communicated to the public as an inclusive heritage landscape for all to visit.[25] This provides rather a marked contrast with the idea communicated through the idea of the 'English Wall'. The complexity of the associations connected with Hadrian's Wall indicates the value of addressing the monument and its landscape as a 'debatable land',[26] an idea that perhaps helps to contradict the creation of simple dualities.

Hadrian's Wall and the Roman Empire

Hadrian's Wall was built during the 120s AD on the orders of the emperor Hadrian, and served for most of the period of Roman rule as the northern boundary of the province of Britannia.[27] It was one of a large number of frontier works of varying character that helped to define the edges of the Roman Empire, across Western, Central, and Eastern Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East (Fig. 11.2).[28] These frontier works survived in use for several centuries and generally ceased to function during the late-fourth and early-fifth centuries.

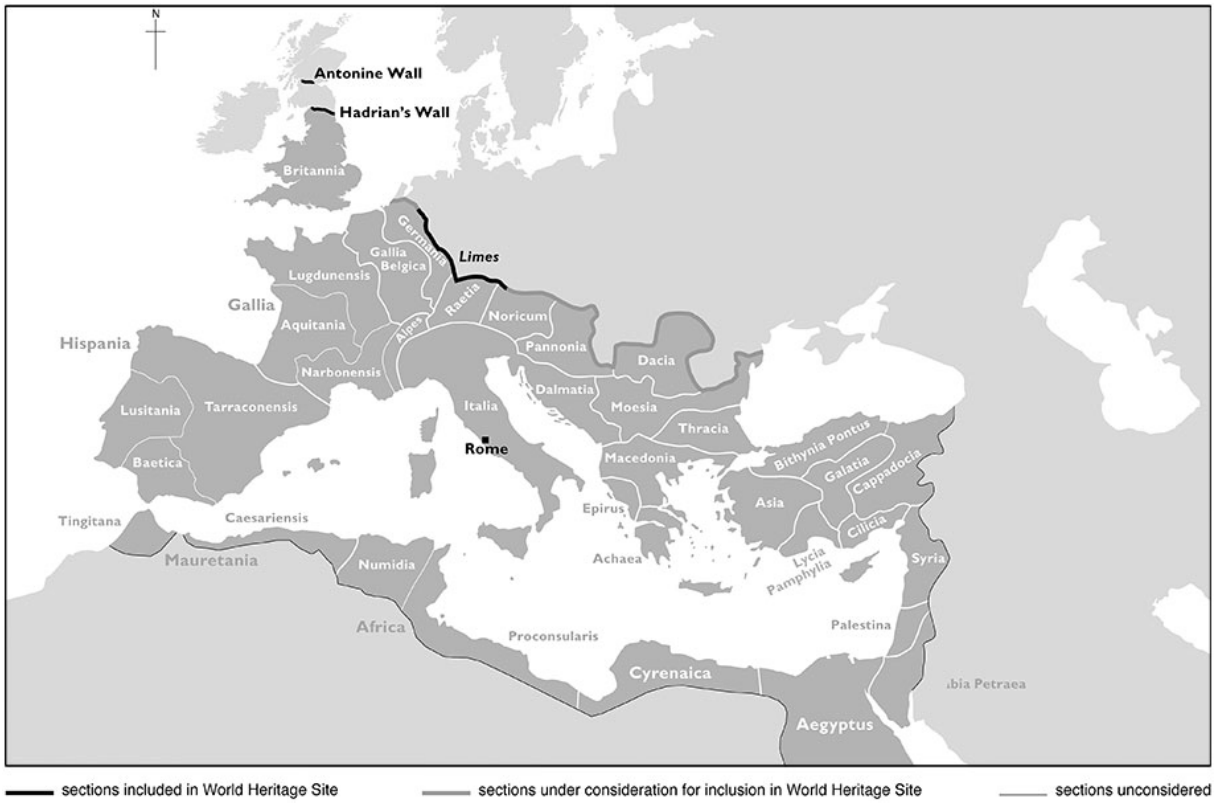

Fig. 11.2. The Frontiers of the Roman Empire, and the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site. Drawn by Christina Unwin.

We have little evidence for the Wall's original purpose and function, and the writings of Classical authors do not provide any clear indications. It is mentioned in various texts, most of which suggest that it was built by the emperor Septimius Severus during the early-third century, although the evidence of inscriptions and stratigraphic excavation indicates that it was constructed on the orders of Hadrian.[29] The idea of the role of Roman frontiers as dividing barbarians from Romans, including the comment in the *Historia Augusta* (above), built on the writings of Classical authors who emphasized the stark division between the civilized peoples of the Mediterranean world and the barbarians of the imperial peripheries, including the particularly barbaric populations of the British Isles.[30]

This frontier consisted of a stone curtain Wall with a substantial V-shaped ditch to the north. Every Roman mile along its length there was a milecastle with two turrets between each pair of milecastles. The milecastles acted as guarded gateways through the curtain Wall. Eighteen

forts lay along or just behind the line of the Wall, which was also followed to the south by a Roman road.[31] Some way to the south lay the substantial and enigmatic earthwork known as the *vallum*. It has often been supposed that the Wall acted as an armed line of defence, but it is more probable that it was constructed and used for most of its period of use as a means to observe the surrounding landscape and to monitor and control movement across its line.[32] The Wall was briefly disused from around AD 140 to 160 when another frontier work—the Antonine Wall—was constructed further to the north (in what is now Scotland). It was re-established in the 160s AD and used until the end of Roman rule, during the early-fifth century. Life at some of the forts may have continued into the post-Roman era.[33]

The 'English Wall': 'Home Rule' and Brexit, 1997–2017

Reflections on identities across the various parts of the 'United Kingdom' have changed in response to discussions of the devolution of power to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.[34] A cartoon by Michael Cummings in *The Times* on 1 March 1997 (reproduced in Hingley (2012), Figure 15.7), featured Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, opening 'Pandora's Box' with Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party, emerging from its confines.[35] Salmond, who is portrayed as an octopus and dressed in tartan and a tam o'shanter, holds a placard stating 'Passport controls at Hadrian's Wall'. This satirical cartoon drew upon the earlier history of the Wall, casting it in a new light in the context of the debates of the late 1990s about Scottish Home Rule as Blair's government aimed to devolve increased power to Scotland.[36]

The Wall had increased prominence from 2012 to 2014 as a marker of national unity and/or division as the referendum on potential Scottish independence gained momentum prior to the eventual rejection of the idea. The items considered below include articles from a number of national and regional newspapers, cartoons, an architect's website, and some political posters. What unites all these media is their focus on Hadrian's Wall as a marker of the geographical extent of English territory and the physical, historical, and territorial relationship between England and Scotland. These receptions are clearly not all trying to say the same

thing, but they are united in focusing attention on England, Scotland, and the Wall.

Brendan Carlin

On 6 February 2012, the *Mail on Sunday* included an item, '"Hadrian's Wall" customs if Scotland goes it alone to stop illegal migrants flooding into England'.[37] This was written by Brendan Carlin, the *Mail on Sunday* political reporter. His comments are directly critical of the general policy of the Scottish National Party, which was campaigning for the leave vote. The author argued that a Hadrian's Wall-style border might have to be built if Scotland was to gain independence. This concern was related to a Foreign Office memo which it was claimed had been leaked to the paper. The report supposedly considered that an independent Scotland would be required to join the Schengen open-borders system used by twenty-five European states, and which Britain had opted out of. It was suggested that this would enable anyone to travel from continental Europe to Scotland without any internal border checks, which meant that immigration and passport checks would be needed along the English–Scottish border. The article was accompanied by a colour photograph of a part of the curtain Wall on the central upland section stating, 'Hadrian's Wall on the English Scottish border at Northumberland was built when the two countries were divided'. Finally, the article stated: 'Hadrian's wall was built along the border by the Romans from 122 AD.'

Many of the readers' comments that accompany the online version of Carlin's article follow the same dualistic agenda by associating the area to the south of the Wall with the English and the area to the north with the Scots.[38] Carlin's article and many of the readers' comments were clearly opposed to the idea of Scottish independence and raise a number of issues about the way that the myth of the 'English Wall' draws upon genealogical roots. The curtain Wall survived as a substantial disused monument into the post-Roman age and was drawn upon by Gildas during the sixth century AD and by Bede during the eighth century AD.[39] These writers created a directly defensive and moral image, writing about the Wall as a late-Roman manned structure intended to prevent heathen pagan Irish,

Scots, and Picts from destroying Christian peoples to the south of its line.[40] They envisaged the desperate and failed defence of the Wall against northern and western barbarians during the late-fourth century, creating a powerful message for later generations. These writings had a major influence in later ages, and it has been suggested that Gildas' and Bede's comments on the Wall explain the fixation of some modern writers with the frontier work's defensive purpose.[41] Evidently, the idea of the southern British during the later-fourth century as the 'English' is problematic. The Angles were a Germanic people who are widely thought to have migrated to Britain during the fifth and sixth centuries AD. Bede was aware that the Angles settled in Britain during and after the collapse of Roman rule, so how did the Wall become associated with England? Was this just due to the co-incidence of the location of the Wall in the area of the territory that came to define the border zone between England and Scotland?

Bede's comments on the Wall influenced the thirteenth-century maps of Britain attributed to Matthew Paris which mark the line of the Wall; indeed two of these maps (Maps A and B) state, in Latin, '*murus dividens anglos et pictos*' ('the wall divided the Angles and the Picts').[42] The Matthew Paris maps clearly drew upon Bede, who wrote of the attempts of Britons to defend the Wall against the marauding Irish and Picts.[43] The artist who produced the Matthew Paris maps presumably modified Bede's writings to define the Wall as the northern boundary of the Angles. These maps also demonstrate the considerable significance of this monument in the medieval mind, since they generally only mark natural features and major ecclesiastical locations.[44]

Until the seventeenth century the most common name for the monument that we know as Hadrian's Wall was the 'Pict's Wall', presumably stemming from the comments of Gildas and Bede.[45] This was probably a form of shorthand to convey the idea that the Wall was built by the Romans and against the Picts. Another stage in the history of the Wall as a marker of English territory occurred during the medieval border wars, when it ran through the 'debatable lands' along the English–Scottish borders.[46] Raiding and minor insurrection were common across this landscape for centuries until England and Scotland became united, and the borders settled and order imposed. The 'border watches' during the sixteenth century covered a vast territory either side of the Wall and it has

been suggested that the standing remains of the ‘Pict’s Wall’ may have helped to prevent the movement of raiders across its line.[47] By the later-sixteenth century, if not before, certain local landowners were fully aware of the location and Roman dating of this Wall.[48]

These early-medieval and medieval receptions indicate why the English and Scots have sometimes associated the Wall with the national border between the two countries. Carlin in the *Mail on Sunday* seems, however, to imagine that the identities of the modern countries of England and Scotland are adamantine and immutable, since he comments that the Wall was built in the 120s AD ‘when the two countries were divided’. In fact, the Wall had been out of use for centuries when the independent kingdoms of England and Scotland came to be defined. This national border crystallized in its current location some way to the north of the Wall during the tenth to twelfth centuries.[49] Whether Carlin was aware of this basic history is unclear from his comments, although many of his readers may well not have been.

The Flag of St George and the Hanoverian Military Way

In September 2013 John Scott, the Hadrian’s Wall Coordinator, mentioned to me that a series of posters had been pasted onto the back of road signs running down the B6318, the road that runs between Chollerford and Greenhead in Northumberland. I swiftly drove down the road and noticed several of these signs, which were removed soon after, presumably by the Highways Authority. They included a flag of St George and a banner across the base reading ‘HOME RULE’. Pasted onto the backs of a number of signposts they were visible to cars driving from west to east (Fig. 11.3).

Fig. 11.3. Political posters pasted on the rear of road signs along the B6318 at Twice Brewed in Cumbria. Photograph by Richard Hingley, 13 September 2013.

The examples that I examined were pasted immediately to the rear of signs directing visitors to sites along Hadrian's Wall, which lies just to the north of the B6318. I was at the time confused by the idea of Home Rule for England but suspected, as did John Scott, that the posters had been deliberately pasted in these locations. Hugh Kearney has noted that the flag of St George is now displayed far more widely in England than used to be the case, perhaps partly as a result of the move to give Wales and Scotland a greater degree of home rule during the 1990s and early 2000s.[50] A quick scan of the Internet using Google in September 2013 indicated the presence of a political move for Home Rule in England that focuses on the flag of St George.

The interesting aspect of this location is that the modern B6318 follows the line of the 'Hanoverian' military way, a road that was constructed as a result of the 'Jacobite Rebellion' of 1745–6.[51] The Jacobite threat to the

Hanoverian monarchy of Britain included the crossing of the Pict's Wall by Charles Edward Stewart's army, an event that was noted by several northern English antiquaries. This uprising was ended by the violent suppression of the 'rebels' at the battle of Culloden and across Highland Scotland in 1746. The military way was constructed between Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Carlisle in the early 1750s and evidently built in a highly symbolic fashion upon the location and structure of Hadrian's Wall.[52] In its eastern sections this eighteenth-century road was built directly on the flattened foundations of the Roman curtain Wall and it also incorporated stones from Hadrian's Wall in its structure. Several antiquaries were deeply disturbed by what they saw as a wanton act of vandalism, but one of them who had been directly involved in troubles caused by the 1745–6 uprising on the border viewed the road as a 're-edification' of the Roman frontier.[53] The new road was thought likely to help to re-establish metropolitan order on this long-disputed frontier.

Whoever was responsible for placing these 'Home Rule' posters must, presumably, have been drawing upon the symbolic role that the Wall has long played in defining the identity of the English as set against the Jacobite Scots. Murray Pittock has explored the way that the Jacobites were stereotyped as 'Celtic' invaders after the '45.[54] Parallels were drawn by English writers during the late 1740s between the Scottish Highlanders and the Gauls, Caledonians, and barbarians of northern Europe that had been addressed in Classical accounts.[55] The placing of these posters claiming 'Home Rule' for the English was, presumably, a response to the discussions about Scottish independence. The use of the Hanoverian military way was surely deliberate, as a result of its perceived role as a re-edification of Hadrian's Wall. This is a symbolic act of reinforcement of the Roman frontier, which draws upon the idea of the building (or re-building) of a division. I suspected in 2013 that the desire for Home Rule in England was greater than many academics had previously believed.[56]

Hugo Gye and the Wall's Re-building

The *Daily Mail* on 23 September 2013 contained an article by Hugo Gye entitled 'Who needs a referendum? Separation of Scotland from England

begins as craftsmen rebuild Hadrian's Wall a year ahead of crucial poll'.[57] This was accompanied by a number of colour photographs of craftsmen 'rebuild[ing] Hadrian's Wall in northern Britain'. The article noted that four workmen from Cumbria were shoring up 'weak sections of [the] Roman frontier' and that this £500,000 project, commissioned by the Hadrian's Wall Trust, was using the original stones to reinforce the wall. Gye observed that 'the project is intended as a way of protecting the ancient stone wall—but one of the workers jokes that they may have to reinforce the barrier with concrete if the referendum is successful in splitting up Britain'. He also noted that, since the Act of Union in 1707, the Wall has run across the middle of the United Kingdom, but after the referendum, it could become an international border once again. The debates about the unification of Great Britain that occurred in poems and polemical works between the early-seventeenth century and early-eighteenth century often mused on the ruination and re-building of the Wall.[58]

The works that Gye observed were also part of a lengthy history of the physical re-building of the Roman fabric of the Wall. After some early and poorly documented re-buildings of the curtain Wall during the eighteenth century, substantial efforts to uncover and re-face the Wall commenced under the antiquary John Clayton during the mid-nineteenth century.[59] The remains of the curtain Wall were eroded, buried, and invisible in many places, and Clayton commenced an ambitious programme of work to uncover and display these remains to his friends and other visitors. His campaign of work was continued by his successors and taken up by the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and the Department of the Environment during the period from the 1930s to the 1980s.[60] The exposed sections of curtain Wall that are the result of this restoration still require continued management as they are susceptible to deterioration, and the works that Gye was discussing were part of a recent programme intended to manage and conserve the monument. A further irony is that these workmen were actually re-building a modern farm dyke which lay on top of the foundations of Hadrian's curtain Wall, possibly a boundary initially constructed in the nineteenth or early-twentieth century to prevent sheep wandering over the line of a farm boundary.[61] The concept of the 'English Wall' appears in this article to be primarily a joke. Many of the readers' comments on the online version of this article also reflect upon

the identities of ancient and modern peoples living north and south of the Wall.

‘Salmond’s Wall’ and April Fool’s Day 2014

On 14 September 2013, *The Journal*, a north-eastern English regional paper, included an article by Adrian Pearson-Jou pointing out the potential problems that might result from a successful Scottish independence vote.[62] This noted that the London government’s Scottish Minister Michael Moore had discussed the possible need for border controls, noting that ‘some have made the case for Salmond’s Wall as the new border’. A number of items on the Internet played around with this idea of ‘Salmond’s Wall’, which renamed Hadrian’s Wall after the then leader of the Scottish National Party, Alex Salmond, recalling Cummings’ earlier cartoon for *The Times*. This concept inverts the idea of the ‘English Wall’ and reflects also upon the idea of the Pict’s Wall.

On 1 April 2014, an article entitled ‘Secret Plan to rebuild Hadrian’s Wall’ appeared on the Building Design website.[63] This described a leaked secret plan to rebuild the Wall should Scotland win the vote for independence in Autumn 2014. It mentioned that this would involve the re-building of ‘the crumbling wall’ to its original proportions in order to create an ‘imposing barrier’ between Scotland and England. It described glass gatehouses that would be constructed every ten miles with an immigration office and a customs official. The proposed design of the new Wall was evidently based on the facade of the Scottish parliament and the article mentioned that it was unclear whether the plan was drawn up in Scotland or England. A number of other joking references to the Wall and to Scottish independence were posted on the Internet on April Fool’s Day 2014.

Alex Hughes’ cartoon

This cartoon is one of the most visual examples of a reflection on the Scottish independence debate that emerged just prior to the vote on 4

September 2014 (Fig. 11.4).

Fig. 11.4. A cartoon titled ‘Hadrian’s Wall Extension Plan’, © Alex Hughes, alexhughescartoons.co.uk. *Tribune Political Cartoons*, 5 September 2014. https://tribunecartoons.com/2014/09/04/hadrians-wall-extension-plan/.

Hughes has noted on his website that he is a freelance cartoonist who regularly draws political cartoons for the *Tribune*, the BBC, the *Big Issue*, and other publishers. The *Tribune Cartoons* site is a website that aims to show ‘Politics in Pictures’. The cartoon in question shows David Cameron leaning over a table on which is a model showing a ‘Hadrian’s Wall Extension Plan’.[64] It shows the new Wall as running along the line of the border between England and Scotland rather than along the exact line of the original Roman Wall, although it has been extended to follow the coastline of England and Wales, excluding Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Europe. It was intended as a critical reflection upon the policy of the Conservative government at this time, since it portrays Cameron as quipping, ‘This should solve all our problems … ’. It seems particularly ironic today that the new Hadrian’s Wall includes a placard stating ‘No Boris’! Boris Johnson ended up supporting the move to leave the EU

during 2016 and is currently (December 2019) heading the attempts to complete the Brexit process, although in 2014 he seemed pro-Europe. The cartoon is playing knowingly on the political ambitions of Cameron and Johnson, which have subsequently led to growing divisions and considerable political instability within the 'United Kingdom'.

Brexit and the Breaking Up of Britain

The six examples of conceptual re-buildings that have been reviewed play in various ways on a concept that has long been used as a way of reflecting on ideas about the division of England and Scotland. Many other references on the Internet before and after the referendum debate also played around with the concept of re-building the Wall as a customs and immigration barrier if the independence campaign had resulted in an independent Scotland, although, when a majority of the Scottish population voted against independence, these political references to the Wall were absent for a while.

As the debates about Britain leaving the EU have evolved since late June 2016, Hadrian's Wall has again been called upon. On 28 July 2016, Alix Culbertson in the *Express* newspaper wrote of 'Nicola Sturgeon's "barmy" calls for Scottish independence' which, according to the Scottish UKIP politician David Coburn, would require a 'barbed wire Hadrian's Wall'.[65] The Internet in January 2018 included multiple references to Donald Trump and the potential parallels with the American President's divisive efforts to transform the Mexican frontier into a monumental wall. Thomas de Monchaux in *The New Yorker* on 11 December 2016 suggested that 'some distant Anglo-American memory of it [Hadrian's Wall] may help to explain the political power behind the idea of a wall'.[66] This interesting suggestion was not supported by any information. There are also some cautionary tales aimed at Donald Trump that refer to the function and failings of Hadrian's Wall. Some other websites argue that Britain (England and Wales?) should follow a similar approach in re-building Hadrian's Wall and forcing the Scottish government to pay for it.[67]

Alex Hughes' cartoon appears to have particular currency in this regard. He shows Northern Ireland as excluded from the territory enclosed by the Wall in addition to Scotland and, as such, he inadvertently predicted the regions of Britain in which the highest proportion of people would vote to remain within the EU. In Roman times, Hadrian's Wall walled southern Britain into a Mediterranean-based empire. In Hughes' cartoon this is reversed with the extended Hadrian's Wall shutting out the rump of the UK from continental Europe, which continues to include Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Hadrian's Wall and the Frontiers of the Roman Empire

There is a deep irony in Hughes' inadvertent geo-political prediction of the potential mapping of post-Brexit Britain. Hadrian's Wall was an international frontier and is now part of a transnational World Heritage Site that closely links southern Britain (the Roman province of Britannia) to the Mediterranean-focused Roman Empire. In Hughes' mapping of the 'extension plan', the Wall serves the purpose of shutting out the Scots, the Irish, and the people of continental Europe from the rump of the UK across England and Wales.

A review of international archaeological research on the Frontiers of the Roman Empire illustrates why many Roman archaeologists tend to react negatively to uses of Hadrian's Wall that draw messages relating to the division and/or unity of Scotland and England.[68] During the mid-nineteenth century, antiquaries working on the archaeological remains of Hadrian's Wall became increasingly aware that it was just one part of an international system of Roman frontier works that defined the empire's northern limits.[69] Co-operation commenced between scholars involved in the study of the Roman frontiers in England, Scotland, and Germany. The scale of research into these frontier works increased during the late-nineteenth century, with the involvement of the internationally well-connected scholars Theodor Mommsen and Francis Haverfield.[70] Co-operation continued throughout the twentieth century, and in 1949 Eric Birley organized the first Congress of Roman Frontier Studies (Limes Congress).[71] Since then, the Roman Frontiers Congress has met on twenty-four occasions in various parts of the frontier lands of the former Roman

Empire.[72] This has led to the development of an extensive international network of scholars working on the Roman frontier.[73] It has also led to the recognition that Hadrian's Wall was merely one of a number of impressive Roman works that defined the frontiers of this empire. This clearly undermines any idea of the Roman Wall as indicator of the national division between Scotland and England, communicating it as part of an international system of frontier works running across northern central and eastern Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.[74]

Early in the twenty-first century, the growing internationalization of research encouraged discussions about the establishment of a transnational Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site, of which Hadrian's Wall forms one key element (Fig. 11.2).[75] Currently this World Heritage Site includes Roman frontier works in England, Scotland, and Germany, although it is hoped that many of the European sections of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire will be inscribed during the next few years.[76] The frontier works across the Middle East and North Africa appear less likely to be added to this transnational monument for reasons of political stability. The nomination and inscription of the Roman frontier works across Europe has focused attention on the co-operation of heritage managers, Roman archaeologists, national governments, the European Union, and UNESCO towards a common goal.[77]

The Antonine Wall was inscribed as part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site in 2008, and Alex Salmond wrote a Foreword to David Breeze's book *Edge of Empire: Rome's Scottish Frontier* the same year. Salmond had previously addressed the supposed 'Celtic heritage' of the Scots in his Playfair Lecture in Edinburgh on 12 December 2007, suggesting a distinctive ethnic character for the communities of the northern and western UK that links these people to others in western Europe.[78] This was part of the Scottish National Party's campaign for Scottish independence, and the Antonine Wall also had a role to play in this programme. Salmond remarked that:

> … nearly 2,000 years ago, southern Scotland was for a relatively short time brought by military force into a vast empire with Rome as its capital, though the north of the country was able to retain its freedom from conquest. Today, of our own free will, we in Scotland participate in the European Union, whose founding treaty was signed in the same city.[79]

Robert Witcher has argued that the successful nomination of the Antonine Wall as part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site can be understood as a 'Scottish nationalist enterprise'.[80] He argues that historically the Wall's role as a symbol of Roman—and, by association, English—imperial control has meant that it played a limited role in Scottish history and identity. The antiquarian and archaeological research on this Wall has been significant,[81] although it appears true to state that the Antonine Wall has never had as prominent a role in the mind of the Scottish public as that of Hadrian's Wall in England.[82] Within an increasingly autonomous Scotland, the Antonine Wall has become symbolic of Scotland's wider historical associations with Europe. This has also drawn the remains of the monument into comparison with other World Heritage Sites, including the Great Wall of China and the Taj Mahal.[83] The inscription of the Antonine Wall within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site has helped to build the Scottish government's claim to connections with mainland Europe, drawing upon a contrasting association for Hadrian's Wall as a symbol of English identity.

Turning back to Hadrian's Wall, the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport's project (December 2017 to January 2018) to sign an agreement with the Chinese government for the Hadrian's Wall and Great Wall of China World Heritage Sites to work together to increase cultural and historical understanding might seem ill judged.[84] It promotes one particular section of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire World Heritage Site at the expense of the others.[85] The timing of this agreement appeared particularly unfortunate with regard to the discussions about Brexit and the relationship of Scotland to the UK, as the political negotiations that are under way serve as a reminder of the deeply nationalistic basis of the ways that many nations use World Heritage status.[86] Participants from Scotland are being involved in the 'Wall to Wall' initiative that has emerged from these discussions between the British and Chinese governments in order to ensure that the Antonine Wall is not ignored in the promotion of international co-operation.

It is far more realistic to accept that both Walls connect Britain to the Roman Empire rather than conceiving that they should represent national assets.[87] This fits the heritage agenda which supports the idea of both Walls as inclusive landscapes for all to visit.[88] The potential divisive role

of frontiers throughout history conflicts with this role, forming a contradiction in the roles played by Hadrian's Wall and the Antonine Wall today.[89]

Debatable Lands and the Celtic–Classical Duality

How significant therefore is the conception of the 'English Wall'? Ancient monuments are physical structures that do not disappear when they cease to be used for their original purposes.[90] From a literal point of view, clear difficulties are posed by the idea of the Wall as a boundary to Englishness (or to Scottishness). A literal deconstruction of these receptions would, however, ignore the historical depth and power of the receptions that have drawn upon the Wall since medieval times to represent the divisions between the kingdoms of Scotland and England. We cannot discount the powerful associations of Hadrian's Wall with ideas about the northern boundaries of civilization and the southern boundary of Scottish Celticity. This carries associations that label people from further north (and west) as at least partly barbarian and 'other'. This may be drawn upon in a manner that is joking or satirical, or it may be intended literally. Cartoons and websites usually do not make their motivations entirely clear and, indeed, it is the ambiguity of these representations that often creates their humour and power.

Many politicians and archaeologists evidently did not take the growing aspirations of a fairly large proportion of the population of England and Wales into account in considering issues of Britain's membership of the European Union. I found the flag of St George/Home Rule poster to be worrying in 2013, but perhaps I was not being realistic about the desire of some people in England for 'home rule'. In a world of growing regionalism and re-assertive nationalism, Hadrian's Wall appears for some people to have a pre-defined significance related to myths that address its (supposed) original purpose to exclude the uninvited. Archaeologists and heritage managers have been trying hard to communicate a different set of images of international networking and co-operation, and this seems a vital message to try to communicate in the present context.[91] Dualistic thought may be powerful but it is also problematic.[92]

In this context a political and literary concept offers an alternative way of viewing the Wall that helps to challenge insistent dualities.[93] Rather than focusing on one strong image, for example that of the Roman military landscape or the ancestral division of England from Scotland, it is possible to contemplate 'Hadrian's Wall Country' as a debatable land.[94] Despite a degree of continuity in the way the monument has been conceived, it is important to ensure that the visible evidence for the monumental nature of Hadrian's Wall does not undermine the debatable physical, economic, religious, and intellectual landscapes through which it has always passed.[95]

How much of this discussion has to do with concepts of the Classical and the Celt that form the theme of this volume? The arrival of the peoples known as the Angles and Saxons during the fifth and sixth centuries AD evidently raises issues with the idea of the 'English Wall', undermining the logic of using a Roman monument to define the territorial identity of a medieval kingdom and modern country. The ethnic origins of people living in England are, indeed, far more complex than this Anglo-Saxon origin myth suggests, and the idea of the English as a mixed race derived from waves of invaders has persisted alongside the Germanic myth for centuries.[96] Recent work on ancient human DNA (aDNA) is backing up the idea that the identities of people across the UK are very complex, partly helping to undermine the idea of Anglo-Saxon ancestors.[97] It used to be supposed that the ancient Britons were 'Celtic' and that many of the modern peoples of Wales, Scotland, Cornwall, and Ireland derived from these genetic roots. The aDNA work is also undermining the simplicity of such an assumption.[98]

Education and heritage provisions may also be serving to erode the idea of a Celtic identity for the peoples of northern and western Britain. There has been a sustained attack on the idea of Celtic prehistory in archaeology and heritage since the 1980s.[99] Ideas of Celtic identity are rarely developed in museums and at heritage centres today.[100] The reason for the decline of the concept of Celtic prehistory may well be that such a concept of ancestry does not project an inclusive image for society across particular parts of the UK today.[101] Ideas about the Iron Age at museums and archaeological venues have often been developed to project an image of an egalitarian and sustainable lifestyle, and to sideline ideas of the

mythical and the ethnic ancestry of contemporary UK populations.[102] This is not to suggest that ideas of the Celtic past and present have entirely ceased to be relevant with regard to people's views about the Wall. A search for images of 'Celts' and 'Hadrian's Wall' on Google produces websites that discuss battles led by Iron Age and Roman re-enactors, and references to the English National Curriculum and school projects. There are quite a number of less official venues at which the idea of Celtic spirituality continues to be referenced, although these are mainly eco retreats and holiday venues scattered across England, Scotland, and Wales.[103]

The use of the Wall as a geographical marker for the extent of England, however, evidently draws upon another powerful origin myth. Anthony Smith has recently emphasized the significance of Classical ideals in the formation of modern nations.[104] Nation-building across Europe has drawn deeply upon Classical architecture and urban planning, and Hadrian's Wall has long been considered the most important of Britain's Roman monuments.[105] Classical Rome has been drawn upon since the Renaissance as a source for contemporary English greatness, an idea that has been influential since the work of William Camden in the late-sixteenth century.[106] This suggests that those people living in the Roman province of Britannia were protected by the Wall and consequently progressed to a more elevated state of order and peaceful living than others living in present-day Scotland and Ireland—the areas beyond the imperial frontiers. During early-modern times this concept was used to label the populations of the northern and western areas of the British Isles as 'barbarians' and to justify the use of force to impose order across these lands, a model for later oppressive activities across the overseas territories incorporated in the British Empire.[107] This dualistic concept of civilization and barbarity has continued to form a powerful image in modern times, ignoring the collapse of Roman rule during the fifth century and the processes through which the Classical past was rediscovered in Britain from the earlier-sixteenth century.[108]

Most of the receptions of the Wall explored above are evidently humorous or satirical in character, but the political posters on the Hanoverian military way were presumably intended to communicate a more divisive view about the rights of people living to either side of the

Wall's line. This idea has emerged as a reaction to the growth of greater independence for the Scots since the late 1990s, although it draws upon far earlier roots. A common approach is to question whether the use of origin myths, such as the linking of Hadrian's Wall to the territorial identity of the English and Scots, is supportable in archaeological terms. The ideas of civilization and barbarity that lie at the heart of the idea of the 'English Wall' are, however, part of our national mythology and are still, for example, caught up with our system of school education and media.[109] School children being taught about resistant Celts beyond the Wall and civilized, ordered Romano-Britons within presumably feeds a continuation of ideas that may seem rather old-fashioned and jarring to many of those who have developed a more detailed knowledge of the Iron Age and Roman past.[110] There is another side to this suggestion, linked to the failure of 'scholars', who reflect critically upon how the past is used, to communicate their perspectives in an accessible fashion to people whose education ended at sixteen.

We need to recognize the power of the inherited myths behind ideas of the 'English Wall'. I prefer to use the Wall to tell other tales that communicate the significance of our past as a romantic, sublime, and also a troubling parallel.[111] The Roman frontiers certainly have the potential to communicate co-operative ways forward that do not serve to feed growing political fragmentation, even though they formed the boundaries of a dictatorial and militaristic Empire.[112]

Richard Hingley, *Hadrian's Wall: An Allegory for British Disunity* In: *Celts, Romans, Britons: Classical and Celtic Influence in the Construction of British Identities*. Edited by: Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones, Oxford University Press (2020). © Francesca Kaminski-Jones and Rhys Kaminski-Jones.
DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780198863076.003.0011

[1] The research drawn upon in this chapter is a result of two projects funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, 'Tales of the Frontier' (2007–14; AHE510345/1) and 'Ancient Identities' (2016–19; AH/N006151/1). The results of the first of these projects are summarized in Hingley (2012) and Witcher et al. (2010); for 'Ancient Identities', see Bonacchi et al. (2017), Hingley et al. (2018), and Hingley (in press). This chapter is also deeply informed by the author's role as Chair of the Archaeology Delivery Group for the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Management Plan Committee. It focuses mainly on references to Hadrian's Wall in newspaper journalism. Digital media that draw on the association between English–Scottish identity and the Wall are currently being addressed as part of the 'Ancient Identities' project (Bonacchi et al.

2018). I am particularly grateful to Robert Witcher, Andrew Gardner, Chiara Bonacchi, John Scott, Rob Collins, and Christina Unwin for discussion of the issues raised here. I am also grateful to the audiences in Bern, Durham, Edinburgh, Oxford, Maastricht, and Stirling who have commented on earlier versions of this chapter. Thanks also to the editors for inviting me to contribute to the conference in Oxford and to this publication, and also for their very helpful comments on an earlier version of this chapter. I am grateful to the two reviewers who made such helpful and lucid comments. Lastly, thanks to my undergraduate and Masters students in Durham for a number of stimulating ideas arising from their essays on this topic over the past few years.

[2] Breeze and Jilek (2008); Hingley (2018).

[3] Hingley (2012).

[4] See the Introduction to this volume, 6 n.16.

[5] For origin myths and identity see Samuel and Thompson (1990); Samuel (1994); Miller (1995) 35–40; Brocklehurst and Phillips (2004).

[6] Hingley (2010).

[7] Hingley (2012).

[8] Hingley (2010) 39.

[9] Hingley (2010) 28.

[10] For this translation, see Birley (2005) 121.

[11] Hingley (2012) 37.

[12] Christianson (2002).

[13] Lamont and Rossington (2007) 1–2.

[14] Hingley (2010); Hingley (2012).

[15] Pittock (1999).

[16] Hingley (2008).

[17] Beard and Henderson (1999); Hingley et al. (2018).

[18] Beard and Henderson (1999) 46–7.

[19] Hingley and Unwin (2005) 214–21.

[20] Clarke (2001) has explored the ambiguity at the core of Tacitus' description of Britain in the *Agricola*. The ambiguities within Classical texts describing the people of Britain have been developed since the Renaissance to explore the identity of Iron Age and Roman-period peoples.

[21] Cf. Braund (1996).

[22] Morse (2005); Hingley (2008).

[23] Webster (1999); Hingley et al. (2018).

[24] References in the social media are currently being collected as part of the 'Ancient Identities' project (Bonacchi et al. 2016) and will be reported elsewhere.

[25] Hingley (2012) 333–6; Hingley (2013).

[26] Hingley and Hartis (2011); Hingley (2012) 328.

[27] The fullest summaries of the Roman phases are: Breeze and Dobson (2000), Hodgson (2017), and Collins and Symonds (2019); see also Bidwell (2008), and Symmonds and Mason (2009).

[28] Breeze (2011).

[29] Hingley (2012) 16.

[30] Woolf (2011).

[31] This simplifies a rather more complex group of works that are addressed far more fully in Symmonds and Mason (2009).

[32] Hingley (2012) 295–8. There is still quite a debate about this issue.

[33] Collins (2012).

[34] Cf. Perryman (2008) 16.

[35] Cummings (1997).

[36] Hingley (2012) 318–19. Quite a number of cartoons on Google Images reflect on potential Scottish independence by reference to Hadrian's Wall, although only a few examples will be addressed in this chapter.

[37] Carlin (2012).

[38] Regulations about data protection mean that the comments on Carlin's article cannot be directly quoted here.

[39] For late-antique and early-medieval references to the Wall, see Woolf in this volume, 20–1.

[40] Hingley (2012) 36–43.

[41] Hingley (2012) 43–50.

[42] Shannon (2007) 23.

[43] Hingley (2012) 42. Hunter (2007) considers the identity of the Picts and the Caledonians. Whether they should be seen as Celtic peoples is a contentious issue.

[44] Shannon (2007).

[45] Hingley (2012) 33.

[46] Hingley (2012) 51–64.

[47] Hingley (2012) 57–60.

[48] Hingley (2012) 60–2.

[49] Ellis (1988) 4; Summerson (2000) 2; Hingley (2012) 54.

[50] Kearney (2006) 319.

[51] Hingley (2012) 124–9.

[52] Hingley (2012) 124–9.

[53] Hingley (2012) 125; see Warburton (1753) iv.

[54] Pittock (1999) 54–60.

[55] Hingley (2008) 149–53.

[56] Of course, the Scots and Northern Irish voted more substantially to remain part of the EU but their numbers were overwhelmed by people living to the south of Hadrian's Wall in modern-day England and Wales. See Gardner (2017) and Bonacchi et al. (2018) for some reflections on the Roman past and Brexit. The relationship between Brexit, English home rule, and Welsh home rule is highly complex, given that (for example) Brexit is widely portrayed as anti-devolutionary and pro-British unionist within Plaid Cymru/Welsh nationalist discourse.

[57] Gye (2013).

[58] Hingley (2010).

[59] Hingley (2012) 184–9.

[60] Hingley (2012) 262.

[61] John Scott (pers. com.).

[62] Pearson-Jou (2013).

[63] Building Design online (2014).

[64] Hughes (2014). I am very grateful to Max Kimpton-Smith who found this cartoon while writing an undergraduate essay for me in December 2016.

[65] Culbertson (2016).

[66] de Monchaux (2016).

[67] This material will be the subject of a further article.

[68] This section is a brief review of arguments outlined in greater detail in Hingley (2012) and Hingley (2018).

[69] Hingley (2012) 183.

[70] Hingley (2012) 199–200, 237–8.

[71] Birley (1952).

[72] Hingley (2018) 80.

[73] Birley (2002).

[74] Hingley (2018) 80–5.

[75] Hingley (2018) 80–5.

[76] John Scott (pers. com.).

[77] Breeze and Jilek (2008).

[78] Salmond (2007).

[79] Salmond (2008) 9.

[80] Witcher (2015) 212.

[81] Keppie (2012); Maldonado (2015).

[82] Hingley (2010).

[83] Witcher (2015) 212.

[84] DCMS (2017).

[85] DCMS (2017).

[86] Askew (2010) 20–2.

[87] Hingley (2018) 88–9.

[88] Hingley (2012) 301–25; Hingley (2013).

[89] Hingley (2018) 89–90.

[90] Hingley (2012) 1.

[91] Hingley (2012) 1.

[92] Hingley et al. (2018).

[93] Hingley (2012) 328.

[94] Hingley and Hartis (2011).

95 Hingley (2012) 336.

96 Young (2008).

97 Leslie et al. (2015); Schiffels et al. (2016); Martiniano et al. (2016); Hingley et al. (2018).

98 Hingley et al. (2018).

99 The Introduction to this volume addresses the critical debate about the relevance of the concept of the 'Celt' since the 1980s, see 5–6. For a well-informed account of the concept of Celtic Britain, see Morse (2005) 13, 203 n. 5.

100 The information to support this claim is being collected through the 'Ancient Identities' project and will be published in the final monograph in due course.

101 Rhys (2008) 244–6.

102 Hingley (in press).

103 The Internet also includes a plethora of references to Celtic identities and, as the Introduction to this volume emphasizes, the concept of 'Celtic Civilization' remains current in education and the media today.

104 Smith (2016).

105 Hingley (2012).

106 Hingley (2008).

107 Hingley (2008) 60–6, 148–53.

108 Hingley (2008) 60–6, 148–53.

109 Hingley et al. (2018).

110 Hingley et al. (2018).

111 Hingley (2012).

112 Hingley (2018) 89–90.

APPENDIX

Caradog (1904): Scene Summary and Select Quotations

Rhys Kaminski-Jones

Scene I

Entitled: '*Gorchfygu Cesar*' ['Overcoming Caesar']. Setting: '*Coedwig*' ['A Forest'].

Venutius (King of the Brigantes) and Vellocatus (his weapon-bearer) enter after sounds of battle, trying to find the fighting. Vellocatus suggests that Caradog must already have fled, and tries to find excuses to avoid battle. Venutius denies that the heroic Caradog could have done such a thing, upbraids Vellocatus for cowardice, and rushes off to join the fighting alone. Vellocatus admits in soliloquy that he plans to seduce his queen Aregwedd [i.e. Cartismandua] and raise his station, desiring both Roman victory and the death of his king. Vellocatus hides as sounds of battle approach, and Roman soldiers enter with the emperor Claudius. Claudius's soldiers convince the emperor (against his inclinations) to flee the advancing Britons and save himself. Vellocatus emerges from hiding, and directs Venutius and the pursuing Britons away from the fleeing emperor to advance his own scheme.

Claudius's daughter Genwissa [name derived from Geoffrey of Monmouth] enters, having become separated from the Roman army, and faints in terror. Venutius and his soldiers re-enter, along with Caradog's brother Afarwy [i.e. a version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Arviragus], and reveal that Claudius has successfully escaped. The awakened Genwissa exclaims her relief, and is discovered. Afarwy recognizes Genwissa, but pretends not to (it is later revealed that they previously met and fell in love in Rome, where Afarwy was an ambassador for his father Cynfelyn/Cunobelinus). Venutius and the British soldiers exit in order to report to Caradog, singing of the British victory.

Genwissa fails to recognize Afarwy out of fear. He plays along for a time, threatening to keep her prisoner and seemingly testing her love for him, but eventually Afarwy reveals himself when Genwissa's constancy becomes clear. They reaffirm their attachment to one another, regretting that war must interrupt their love, and Afarwy conducts her back to Caesar's camp.

Scene II

Entitled: '*Caradog yn Encilio*' ['Caradog Retreats']. Setting: '*Coedwig eto*' ['A Forest Again'].

Caradog and Venutius enter, discussing how the tide of battle has turned, and the Britons are in retreat. Caradog wishes for the strength of his British and Trojan ancestors: '*O na chawn fraich Caswallon, a doethineb Lludd, / A llwyddiant Brutus!*' ['O might I not have Caswallon's arm, and Lludd's wisdom, / And the success of Brutus!'], p. 14. They lament that if only Britons were faithful to one another, they would be victorious.

Scene III

Entitled: '*Pudens yn Garcharor*' ['Pudens a Prisoner']. Setting: '*Coedwig*' ['A Forest'].

Pudens (a Roman officer, sent as an ambassador to Caradog from general Ostoriws) is tied to a tree, with British soldiers tormenting him with arrows and spears. Caradog's daughter Gwladys [derived from Claudia Rufina/Gwladys Ruffydd, cf. 151 n.42] enters armed like a hunter, and orders the Britons to free Pudens—when they refuse, she frees Pudens herself. Fighting breaks out, but is stopped by the entrance of Afarwy, at which point the British soldiers flee. Afarwy asks Gwladys why she is defending a Roman, to which Gwladys replies that she only defends him as an ambassador, unlike her uncle Afarwy when he freed Caesar's daughter.

Pudens reveals that in addition to his official mission, he carries a private message to Afarwy from Genwissa. Gwladys reacts to this secret message with a combination of criticism and amused mockery. Gwladys leaves the stage briefly, and Afarwy reads the scroll sent by Genwissa —the emperor's daughter promises that his kindness to her will not be forgotten, and laments that the duties of family and patriotism are obstacles to their attachment. Gwladys returns and mocks Afarwy again before all three set off for Caradog's camp.

Scene IV

Entitled: '*Cenadwri Ostoriws*' ['Ostoriws' Embassy']. Setting: '*Gwersyll Caradog yng Ngwlad y Siliwriaid*' ['Caradog's Camp in the Country of the Silures'].

Pudens presents himself to Caradog and pays deep respect to his bravery, for which Caradog thanks him. Pudens, in his role as ambassador, then asks on behalf of Ostoriws why there cannot be peace between Romans and Britons, to which Caradog answers that Rome is at fault for coming to Britain and starting the conflict, when Britain has no designs on Rome. When Pudens defends Rome by arguing that they were urged to come by Britons, including Bericos [i.e. Bericus] chief of the Iceni and Caradog's own brother Adminiws [i.e. Adminius], Caradog retorts that both these Britons had fled from the justice of his father Cynfelyn, and asserts his own sovereignty in Britain (to cheers from his chiefs).

Pudens (passing on Ostoriws' message) then claims that Rome will help Caradog to exalt Britain if peace is achieved, recounting what they have already done for the country: paved roads, improved agriculture, grand cities. Afarwy and Venutius express their scorn at this, and Caradog replies that he asks for justice not favours. Caradog then recounts, in language that echoes that of Calgacus in Tacitus' *Agricola* 30, the depredations of Rome in Britain: the ravaging of its lands, famine, and the burning of towns. He asserts that Rome will only allow itself to be free, and though other nations might submit to Rome, Britain never will (his chiefs echo these sentiments, singing '*Prydeinwyr nid ant byth yn gaeth i neb*' ['Britons never shall be

slaves to anyone’], p. 27). Pudens then asserts the foolishness of opposing Rome: he reminds the Britons that Rome has conquered an entire continent, claiming that tribes who are not friends to Rome will be destroyed, and pointing out to Caradog that he has been driven across Britain from east to west. Caradog calls on his chiefs to answer, and each one—even those who previous to the conflict had been friendly to Rome—reaffirm their commitment to the British struggle (Antedrogws: ‘*Cas gwr na charo’r wlad a’i maco*’ [‘Hateful is he who loves not the land that raised him!’], p. 28). Caradog then gives a long speech asserting the patriotic righteousness of his cause, the strength of the British strongholds of Snowdon and Anglesey, and the otherworldly power of British druidism:

> CARADOG*: Dros ryddid fe ddaw llwyth ’rol llwyth ymlaen*
> *Fel cyfyd y mynydd-dir, fryn uwch bryn*
> *Hyd gopa’r Wyddfa draw! Tu hwnt drachefn*
> *Saif Ynys Mon, y Santaidd Dir, lle ceir*
> *Allorau cudd Derwyddon doeth ein gwlad.*
> *Ac yno’r duwiau a tharanfloedd gref*
> *A fflachiant fellt a ddifa’r estron faidd*
> *Roi troed ar draethell Mon! … …*
> CARADOG: For freedom will come forth tribe after tribe
> As the mountain country rises, hill on hill,
> Unto yonder Snowdon’s peak! Beyond again,
> Stands Mona, the Sacred Ground, where are
> The secret altars of our land’s wise Druids.
> And there the gods with powerful thunderclap
> Flash lightning that will destroy the foreigner
> Who dares to place a foot on Mona’s shore! … …

To Pudens’ reply that Rome will scatter the Britons like leaves, Caradog responds that death is preferable to slavery, and the assembled Britons sing the following song (p. 30):

> *Na! Na! Prydain ddywed na!*
> *Prydain ni fydd gaeth! Na! Na!*
> *Dewrion Prydain wnant eu rhan!*
> *Prydain saif o blaid y gwan!*
> *Na! Na! Prydain ddywed Na!*
> *Dewr Brydeinwyr nid ant byth yn gaeth i neb!*
> No! No! Britain answers no!
> Britain will not be enslaved! No! No!
> Britain’s heroes will play their part!
> Britain stands on behalf of the weak!

No! No! Britain answers No!
Brave Britons never shall be slaves to anyone!

Scene V

Entitled: '*Aberthu Gwladys*' ['Sacrificing Gwladys']. Setting: '*Teml Derwyddol. Cylch Derwyddol ynghanol coedwig …*' ['Druid Temple. Druidic circle in the middle of a forest … ']. N.B. The setting reflects elements of Iolo Morganwg's bardic '*gorsedd*', also used in National Eisteddfod ceremonies.

A choir of female voices (singing offstage), laments that Britain lies at the feet of an enemy, informs us that Caradog is in flight, and claims that they seek the help of the goddess Andraste. The procession emerges: it includes the Arch-druidess Hafrena [i.e. Sabrina], nine other priestesses, Gwenffreda [Caradog's wife], other British women, and a number of druids. Girls dance (with increasing speed) before the standing stones whilst singing to Andraste, as the Arch-druidess ascends the *Maen Llog* [i.e. Central Stone].

Led by Hafrena, the women perform a ceremony of prayer, dance, and song intended to select sacrificial victims from amongst them, hoping that Andraste will give the Britons victory over Rome. Gwladys—Caradog's daughter—is selected as the victim. A distraught Gwenffreda asks Andraste that her daughter might be spared, given that she willingly sent her sons to die in battle. Gwladys, however, is willing to sacrifice herself for Andraste and Britain.

During another round of prayer and song in honour of Andraste, Gwladys lays herself on the *Maen Llog* to await sacrifice. However, before Hafrena can finish the ceremony, Pudens and some Roman soldiers burst in. Pudens (now referring to Gwladys as '*anwylyd*' ['dear one']) lifts her from the alter and means to rescue her. Gwladys is determined to sacrifice herself despite her love for Pudens, but he carries her away declaring that love is stronger than the Britons' goddess.

Scene VI

Entitled: '*Bradychu Caradog*' ['Betraying Caradog']. Setting: '*Dwy ystafell yng nghartref Venutius Brenin y Brigantwys …*' ['Two rooms in the house of Venutius King of the Brigantes … '].

Scene opens on Aregwedd and Vellocatus in discussion: Aregwedd vacillates about whether or not she should betray Caradog to Rome. Vellocatus attempts to persuade her that turning to Rome is her only option, but hides when he hears the footsteps of a wounded and weary Caradog. Caradog has come to ask the help of his cousin Aregwedd and the Brigantes, confident in her support for him—he remains convinced that the Britons can prevail, given that it was only treachery amongst the Britons that led to their failure in the days of Caswallon and Julius Caesar. Ironically, Caradog identifies Aregwedd as the descendant of Mandubratios, who betrayed Caswallon, but believes that she will right her ancestor's wrongs. A guilty Aregwedd leads Caradog to bed in the next room, and Vellocatus re-emerges.

Aregwedd remains torn and guilty, but Vellocatus convinces his lover that Caradog has usurped the power over Britain that she should have inherited from Mandubratios, and argues

that Caradog's British patriotism merely disguises his selfishness. Aregwedd nevertheless recoils from betraying a guest and family member, and exits, putting Vellocatus in command of her soldiers so that he can do the deed. The soldiers bind the sleeping Caradog, and Aregwedd is called to return: she accuses Caradog of usurping her rights, but Caradog upbraids her betrayal in a long speech, claiming that she will go down in history as a traitor. Aregwedd hides her face in shame, and Vellocatus reels in fear.

Scene VII

Entitled: '*Caradog Ger Bron Cesar*' ['Caradog Before Caesar']. Setting: '*Maes Mawrth yn Rhufain*' ['The Field of Mars in Rome'].

The stage is filled with Roman senators, noblewomen, and soldiers, surrounding a '*Gorseddfainc*' ['throne/seat of judgement']. Claudius and Agrippina enter at the head of a procession including Pudens, Genwissa, Vellocatus, and Aregwedd. Claudius announces a triumph ('*Gwyl Buddugoliaeth*') to celebrate victory over Britain, to much acclaim from the Roman crowd. British spoils and captives are led in, including Afarwy, Gwenffreda, Gwladys, and Caradog; all kneel before Claudius except Caradog. Caesar addresses Caradog, and asks if he has any words before judgement is passed. Caradog expresses wonder at why magnificent Rome would desire mean Britain, in a clear paraphrase of the famous passage in Cassius Dio, *Roman History* 61:

CESAR: *Pa beth a dd'wedi cyn daw'r ddedfryd fawr?*

CARADOG: *Ond hyn. Mi welais heddyw gyfoeth, rhwysg,*

Gogoniant mawredd Rhufain falch

Taenedig ar bob llaw. Ac wrth eu gweld

Rhyfeddu wnes, rhyfeddu eto wnaf

Paham chwenychai hi, neu dithau Cesar,

Perchen hyn i gyd, fy mwthyn gwael

Yn Mhrydain draw.

CAESAR: What say you before the great judgement comes?

CARADOG: Only this. Today I saw wealth, splendour,

The glory of proud Rome's greatness

Spread out on every side. And in seeing them

I wondered, and I wonder still

Why she would desire, or you Caesar,

The owner of all this, my mean hut

In distant Britain.

Claudius is affronted by Caradog's refusal to kneel, but Caradog claims that as Britain's king he was superior to Caesar, and as a prisoner he remains Caesar's equal—this angers Claudius further.

Vellocatus, Aregwedd, and Pudens all ask Caesar to hear their pleas. Vellocatus is called first, and claims responsibility for the capture of Caradog, wondering what his reward might be if the prisoner is freed (Caesar is not pleased). Aregwedd is called next, and stresses her sacrifice in bringing Caradog to Caesar, asking for the reward that is her due. Pudens is then called, and asks for Gwenffreda and Gwladys to be freed and given to him as spoils of war, to which Caesar agrees. Pudens introduces Gwenffreda to Agrippina as queen of Britain, and the Empress greets her as such, returning her crown and asking Gwenffreda to sit next to her. Pudens then asks for permission to marry Gwladys, which is granted—in the meantime, Agrippina orders that Gwladys should be taken under Genwissa's wing. Gwladys and Genwissa discuss the latter's love for Afarwy, and she expresses fear that Afarwy will be executed.

Caesar asks Caradog to speak his last words before he is sent for execution by wild beasts in the circus: Caradog declares that it was not Caesar's arms that defeated Britain, but female betrayal ['female' betrayal is stressed]. This angers Caesar, but Agrippina takes Caradog's side, declaring that Caesar's glory is undermined by the nature of Rome's victory. Caesar fiercely hushes Agrippina, and asks Caradog again what he has to say: Caradog gives a speech that adapts and paraphrases the famous one from Tacitus *Annales* 12.37. The crowd cheers both Caradog and the emperor, and Claudius immediately declares that Caradog has defeated Caesar, frees him, and returns his crown—Caradog immediately offers the latter back to Caesar, declaring that he is now able to do so as a free man rather than a captive.

Caesar then draws attention to Afarwy, and the Roman crowd bays for his blood: Afarwy stands his ground and declares that he has no fear of death. Genwissa then reveals that Afarwy is the man who freed her from British captivity [cf. Scene I], and Caesar declares him free in return: the Roman crowd is divided between those who praise Caesar's mercy, and those still baying for blood. Afarwy tells Caesar that freedom and life are nothing to him without Genwissa, and begs his permission to marry her, or otherwise to die: after interjections by Genwissa and the crowd, Caesar agrees to the marriage, frees Afarwy, and seemingly makes him commander of a legion at Genwissa's request. The crowd applauds Caesar, Genwissa, and Afarwy.

Vellocatus and Aregwedd then ask for their reward for helping Rome, and Caesar refuses, declaring them villainous traitors whom Caesar cannot honour. The Roman crowd calls for their blood (specifically asking for them to be taken '*i ben y graig*' ['to the summit of the rock'], presumably the Tarpeian Rock), and Caradog condemns their unpatriotic betrayal in the play's final speech (p. 56):

CARADOG: *A hyn fo tâl pob bradwr ymhob gwlad*

*Ac oes! Câs gwr na charo'r wlad a'i maco!**

A'r neb a wado'i wlad, fradycha'i deyrn,

Neu a dry gefn ar achos ei gydgenedl,

Bydd hwnnw'n alltud melldigedig mwy

Lle bynnag bo anrhydedd yn cael lle!

PAWB: Y Bradwyr du!

(Llen yn syrthio)

CARADOG: And this be the reward of every traitor in every country

And age! Hateful is he who loves not the land that raised him!*

And one who denies his country, betrays his ruler,

Or turns his back on the cause of his compatriots,

Henceforth let that one be a cursed exile

Wherever honour has its place!

ALL: The black Traitors!

(Curtain Falls)

*N.B. This is a well-known Welsh proverb, referenced throughout the play.

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